THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

MEN and MANNERS, by FRANCIS LATHOM.

The following character of this work is extracted from the Critical Review for September last.

We are induced to give our favourable ſuffrage to the production before us, which, notwithſtanding ſome glaring faults, is evidently the offſpring of a pen accuſtomed to mark with preciſion the viciſſitudes of real life. Jonathan Parkinſon, a ſenſible, rich, and benevolent quaker, and Rachel, a ſuppoſed orphan under his protection, but in reality his own illegitimate child, are the moſt prominent characters of the work. That of Parkinſon is not entirely original; but it is expanded with ſuch felicity and judgment as to command, throughout, the ſympathy of the feelings and the reverence of the underſtanding. Rachel is a character of more originality, and delineated with equal ſkill: it is a compoſition of good ſenſe and feeling, in which all the ſolid manly virtues operate freely, without the ſlighteſt violation of the delicacy and propriety of female conduct.

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THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By Mr. SMITH.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe nor death diſmay, ſtood calm as a Chriſtian in the craſh of worlds.

VOL. II.

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THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

CHAP. I.

ON the enſuing day, after breakfaſt, Auguſta being alone with her father, requeſted permiſſion that ſhe might be allowed to ſpend the reſidue of the day with Clariſſa, and that he would not mention to any perſon where ſhe was gone, as ſhe wiſhed to have ſome converſation with her without interruption.

To this requeſt Sir Charles aſſented.

Auguſta left the houſe unobſerved by Edward, and ſhortly reached the cottage, where ſhe found Clariſſa employed in domeſtic offices and attending upon Mrs. Bentley.

They had ſcarcely been together an hour before Freeman was obſerved entering the garden gate.

Auguſta requeſted of Clariſſa, that ſhe would convey her where Freeman ſhould not have an opportunity of ſeeing her. "I will go up ſtairs," ſaid ſhe to Mrs. Bentley, "and ſtay with her till he has left the place." But this was impracticable, as ſhe muſt have paſſed the door to have aſcended the ſtairs, and as it ſtood open Freeman could not avoid ſeeing her. "Convey me any-where," continued

Auguſta,

Auguſta, "it matters not to what place, for if my couſin ſhould know that I am here, he will mention it on his return, and I ſhall probably be troubled with Theodore's company, which (for particular reaſons that I will hereafter ſtate) I wiſh to avoid."

Clariſſa had ſcarcely time to conduct her into a ſmall pantry adjoining, and to ſhut the door, before Freeman entered the cottage.

"I took the liberty," ſaid Freeman, "to wait on you for the purpoſe of enquiring concerning your health. I hope you ſuſtained no injury laſt night, by walking through the dew?"

Clariſſa thanked him, and aſſured him ſhe had not.

"It gives me great pleaſure," ſaid Freeman, "to meet you here alone, as I have an affair to communicate to you, that nearly concerns my future peace of mind."

Clariſſa conſidered that Auguſta was within hearing; and did not think it prudent he ſhould betray his ſecrets to a third perſon, without his being appriſed of it, as ſhe conceived ſuch a conduct would be ungenerous.

"You never could have come at a more unfavourable opportunity," reſumed ſhe, "as at this time I am under the neceſſity

ceſſity of attending on Mrs. Bentley; and, unleſs it is an affair of that importance which cannot be delayed, I will thank you to call at a more convenient period."

"I am extremely ſorry," replied Freeman, "that I have been ſo unfortunate, as I wiſhed to have had a long converſation with you; but as it is, I will content myſelf by ſaying a few words which will not detain you more than five minutes, and ſhall therefore without any preface declare to you, that the firſt moment I beheld you in the poſſeſſion of Mrs. Gripe, I felt a ſentiment of affection for you. When I viſited you here in the morning, and beheld you differently attired, I felt convinced that you would grace a higher circle.

"During the whole of the day that I had the happineſs to ſpend in your company you ſhone with ſuperior luſtre, and I had the pleaſure to find that my attachment to your perſon was increaſed by the accompliſhments of your mind.

"I wiſh to deal candidly with you; therefore, to ſum up all I have to ſay in a few words, I love you with ſincerity, and ſhall eſteem it the greateſt happineſs of my life to call you honourably mine."

Clariſſa was conſiderably agitated and confuſed on the receipt of this declaration.

As ſoon as ſhe could compel her tongue to articulate a reply: "Is it poſſible," ſaid ſhe, "that you, ſir, who ſo generouſly

rouſly interfered to preſerve me, ſhould be the firſt to attempt at deſtroying my character?

"How mean and contemptible muſt I appear in the eyes of your uncle!—How much beneath the notice of Miſs Freeman ſhould I reduce myſelf, by liſtening to your addreſſes!—No, ſir, highly as I eſteem you for the generous protection you afforded me, I cannot ſo far degrade myſelf.

"I am well aware of the ſubordinate ſituation my misfortunes have placed me in;—excluſive of this, you muſt pardon me when I ſay, that your profeſſions to me at a time when you are paying your ſerious addreſſes to Miſs Freeman, is an inſult which I did not expect from you, and which I flatter myſelf my conduct has not merited."

"My dear Miſs Leſley," reſumed Freeman, "you wound me in the tendereſt point.

"I am not paying my addreſſes to my couſin; I know that my uncle, who wiſhes it, has circulated ſuch a report, but it is far from being the fact.

"I eſteem Auguſta as my relation; I eſteem her for the many valuable ſentiments ſhe poſſeſſes; but I feel not that affection for her which it would be neceſſary for me to inherit, provided I intended to paſs my life with her.

"The ſame ſentiment is poſſeſſed by her towards me, which I was able to learn from a candid explanation that took place between us ſome time back. With reſpect to the ſubordinate ſituation you are placed in, I cannot ſee it in the ſame light as you do.

"You

"You are equally deſcended (if not ſuperior) to myſelf.

"You have received a liberal education that will render you an ornament to whatever ſociety you may be introduced.

"Am I then to forfeit my hopes of happineſs, becauſe you lack of a few paltry thouſands?"

"Mr. Freeman," replied Clariſſa, "I ſhould eſteem myſelf ungrateful after the ſervices you have rendered me, if I did not attend to whatever you may advance, and reply with candour. This I hope will plead my apology for further enduring it. My misfortunes have placed an inſurmountable barrier between us. I am a wretched orphan, a child of charity, and a cottager:—What would your uncle ſay to ſuch a choice as this?

"You have a father—What would his ſentiments be? and what opinion would the world in general form of ſuch an union?

"Theſe are circumſtances I am confident you have not duly conſidered, or you could not (conſiſtent with the attachment you profeſs) wiſh to introduce me into ſo mortifying, ſo very humiliating a ſituation. —Indeed it cannot be."

"Hold," cried Freeman, "and do not too raſhly decide.—My uncle's opinion would be the ſame if I married a fortune ſuperior to my own: he would think of nothing but the diſappointment he would experience, in not being able to execute his favourite plan.

"I have a father——Happy reflection! —He is indeed a father!—He poſſeſſes every valuable ſentiment that can orna-

ment

ment human nature, and would be proud to find he had a ſon who could diſtinguiſh merit, and deſpiſe every mercenary motive in the choice of happineſs.

"As to what the world may ſay, the better part of ſociety would have the ſame ſentiments as my father; and what the worſt part might advance is infinitely beneath either your notice or mine.

"All this, therefore, I conſider as nothing.

"Can you feel for a plain man, like myſelf, a ſpark of that attachment which would be neceſſary to enſure our future happineſs?"

"I have promiſed," replied Clariſſa, "to anſwer you with candour, and therefore muſt avoid your laſt queſtion.—But, for a moment, I will ſuppoſe I poſſeſſed

the ſame ſentiment which you profeſs; for without that I ſhould never think of entering into the marriage ſtate.

" I ſhall admit likewiſe, that your father poſſeſſes every requiſite affection of a parent towards a child.—This would lead him to overlook the impropriety of your conduct.—But what muſt be his ſentiments reſpecting me?—He would imagine I had endeavoured to trepan your affections for the purpoſe of ſharing your fortune. This would make him look upon me in a contemptible light; and, however he might be inclined through his paternal regard for you to admit your viſits to his houſe, yet, conſiſtent with the opinion he entertained, he never would admit me."

" Good Heaven!" exclaimed Freeman,

" the

" the bare idea of ſuch a conduct is ſhocking to human nature.—How wrongly do you eſtimate pure paternal regard!

" It is plain you never knew a father.—Such a conduct in him would be no more than ſelf-love; he would only conſult his own happineſs by ſeeing me——But it is a mockery of all tenderneſs and affection to ſuppoſe he would not equally conſult mine.

" Is it poſſible that a parent can eſteem his child, and at the ſame time treat its partner with contempt, and ſhut his doors againſt her?

" If you recollect, I told you my father poſſeſſed every valuable ſentiment that could ornament human nature.—Can he poſſeſs theſe and act in the manner you deſcribe?

" As to his harbouring ſo mean an idea that

fortune was your inducement, what muſt then be his opinion concerning me? —My inducement is pure affection.

"My father would ſcorn to harbour ſo narrow and contemptible an opinion. It would, indeed, be a ſingular doctrine to maintain that every perſon who is deprived of fortune muſt likewiſe be deſtitute or incapable of affection, and dead to every ſentiment of love!"

"You foil me," reſumed Clariſſa, "in every argument; I muſt therefore requeſt you to ſay no more upon the ſubject; beſide which, I am particularly engaged at this time.—You promiſed to detain me but five minutes, and twice that period has elapſed."

"Would you," ſaid he, "ſend me hence without one word in my favour? —Believe me, I cannot eaſily relinquiſh

the

fond hope I had entertained of calling you mine."

"Mr. Freeman," replied she, "if I did not esteem you above all others, I should be the most ungrateful creature in existence; but to promise what I have not considered of—I cannot.

"Some other time I will state my objections more at large; at present you must excuse me."

Edward rose, and advanced towards the door; Clarissa attended him.—Then, turning round and taking hold of her hand with an affection and tender solicitude in his countenance that covered her with blushes, he exclaimed, "What nothing, Clarissa—not one word?"

After a pause—"Go, my generous protector," cried she, "and rest assured if I could reconcile such a step with pru-

dence,

dence, what you wiſh, I fear, would not be wanting."

Edward thanked her in rapture; preſſed her hand to his lips, and haſtily departed.

As ſoon as Clariſſa could recover from the perturbation of her ſpirits which this laſt effort had occaſioned, ſhe advanced towards the door and releaſed her captive.

"My dear Miſs Leſley," cried Auguſta, "I ſincerely congratulate you on the conqueſt you have made.—Such men as my couſin are not frequently to be met with;—how happy will you ſpend your life, allied to ſuch a character!"

"That happineſs will never be mine," rejoined Clariſſa; "and I hope you will have the goodneſs to believe me, when I declare, that whatever my ſentiments

may

be reſpecting him, or however I might wiſh it poſſible, I have never, by word or look, encouraged him to make this declaration."

"Of that I am convinced," rejoined Auguſta; "but perhaps you think it neceſſary to make this aſſeveration to me, in conſequence of the general report.

"You may remember I yeſterday informed you to the contrary, and I again aſſure you it is the furtheſt from my thoughts; we eſteem each other as relations, but ſhall never be nearer allied than we are."

"I made uſe of the remark," reſumed Clariſſa, "leſt you ſhould ſuppoſe I had endeavoured to enſnare his affections.—I ſcorn all mercenary motives;—but I will confeſs to you, I have never ſo much regretted the want of fortune as ſince I have

I have been introduced to his knowledge.

"Had our ſituations in life been more upon an equality, Heaven can witneſs with what real pleaſure I ſhould have liſtened to his propoſal.—But as it is, it will be to me a ſource of ſorrow."

"Can it be poſſible," rejoined Auguſta, "that any perſon ſhould obſtinately refuſe happineſs when it courts their acceptance, through a falſe pride and miſtaken notion!—But I ſhall truſt to events; you will think differently hereafter.—Edward will be encouraged by the confeſſion you partly made, and will return to plead his cauſe—I hope with more ſucceſs."

"There I was wrong," ſaid Clariſſa; "I know not how the words eſcaped me, but his look penetrated to my feelings, which,

which, together with the gratitude I owe, threw me off my guard;—and this muſt plead my excuſe, for I can make no other."

"There needs none," reſumed Auguſta; "take my word for it he will eſteem you the more for your candour.—I know him well."

Here Auguſta launched out in encomiums on Edward, and powerfully pleaded his cauſe.

In which attempt I ſhall leave her, while I return to Sir Charles.

CHAP. II.

SOMERS and Theodore (who had been invited by Sir Charles, for the purpoſe of atteſting the execution of the deed of conveyance between Sir Thomas and him), repaired to his houſe at an early hour. And as Sir Thomas had not then arrived, Somers took the opportunity of explaining to him the motives he had for adviſing him to inſiſt on the arrears of rent being conveyed with the eſtate; but did not fully ſtate the particulars, contenting himſelf by ſaying, that Bridport was unfortunately indebted to Sir Thomas, who took a delight in perſecuting him.

This partial explanation on the part of Somers was given leſt Sir Charles (if made acquainted with the whole particulars)

culars) ſhould by his warmth lead Sir Thomas to ſuſpect his motive before he had ſigned the deed.

"Aye, aye," rejoined Sir Charles, "I ſee how it is—this is ſome of your ill-timed benevolence.—

"Sir Thomas (whatever may be his private follies) is by far too generous a character to perſecute a man for his miſfortunes.

"I have no doubt but this fellow has been extravagant.—He has been gambling away his property—rioting in drunkenneſs—attending horſe races—or keeping women; ſome traits of this nature I ſhall find in him."

"I ſhall refer you to Sir Thomas," replied Somers, "after the execution of the deed, and if he then adviſes you to diſcharge

diſcharge him, I hope you will agree to it."

"Whether he does or not," reſumed Sir Charles, "I ſhall certainly do it, as it is your requeſt."

Somers thanked him for the promiſed favour, and having obſerved a diſſatisfaction on the countenance of Theodore, he gave a turn to the converſation by enquiring for Auguſta.

At this juncture Freeman made his appearance.

"I gueſs where ſhe is," cried Freeman, who not finding her at home ſhrewdly ſuſpected ſhe was concealed at Clariſſa's during the time he was making his propoſal to her; "ſhe has gone out to viſit the young lady who was here yeſterday."

"Your

"Your wiſdom may be miſtaken for once," replied Sir Charles.

"Where can ſhe be?" reſumed Freeman; "the carriage is not with her, as it ſtands in the yard, therefore ſhe cannot be far off; but perhaps ſhe is at home, and abſents herſelf leſt ſhe ſhould prove an interruption to the buſineſs you are upon."

"You are mighty inquiſitive," reſumed Sir Charles, "what, it makes you uneaſy I ſee; well, well, I am glad you are ſo much concerned for her:—ſhe will return before it is dark, I have no doubt; but I cannot tell you where ſhe is gone, as I promiſed not to inform any one, as ſhe did not wiſh to be interrupted."

"I have it," ſaid Freeman;—"ſhe is viſiting ſome of her penſioners."

The arrival of Sir Thomas with his attorney put an end to the enquiry.

The deeds were read over—the money paid down—and the ſignatures affixed; but upon the ſuggeſtion of Somers that Theodore would be an improper witneſs on account of his aſſuming a fictitious name, Freeman ſupplied his place.

"And now," ſaid Somers, addreſſing himſelf to Sir Thomas, "as your attorney is preſent it would be the beſt time to ſettle the buſineſs we were ſpeaking of yeſterday."

"I do not comprehend you," replied Sir Thomas, "and will thank you to remind me."

"You may recollect," reſumed Somers, "we were converſing on the affair of Mr. Bridport:—I will thank you therefore

fore to write his diſcharge, and Sir Charles will indorſe it.—But, I believe, I ought to apply to him in the firſt inſtance, as he has purchaſed the arrears of rent;—the right now lays with him."

Sir Thomas bit his lips in an agony of ſpite.

"What is this buſineſs?" cried Sir Charles.

"Nothing of any import," replied Somers:—"only a poor fellow not worth a groat, whom Sir Thomas, at my requeſt, has promiſed to diſcharge.—I hope you will agree to it."

Sir Thomas dreading an explanation, and finding no remedy, determined to make a virtue of neceſſity.

"I never am worſe than my word," ſaid he: "and as Sir Charles has no objection, I will write it immediately."

This he did; and Sir Charles having endorſed it, delivered it to the attorney. Somers at the ſame time wrote an invitation, and requeſted the attorney would do him the favour to incloſe it with the diſcharge.

This buſineſs being adjuſted, although greatly to the diſſatisfaction of Sir Thomas, the party adjourned to dinner.

Theodore could ſcarcely be prevailed upon to taſte a morſel: he was too much chagrined at the diſappointment he had met with in not ſeeing Auguſta; who he concluded had abſented herſelf on purpoſe to avoid him.

He ruminated on the expreſſion of Sir Charles, wherein he confeſſed ſhe had made him promiſe not to inform any one where ſhe was gone, as ſhe did not wiſh to be interrupted.

He

He conceived the company of Freeman could be no interruption to her, as they were generally together; and if ſhe feared any interruption from Somers, or himſelf, it followed, of courſe, that ſhe muſt be gone to viſit ſome perſon with whom they were acquainted: after comparing theſe circumſtances, he conceived ſhe was ſpending the day with Clariſſa.

Thither he determined to bend his courſe in ſearch of her, and make his viſit wear the appearance of accident: having ſettled this point, he excuſed himſelf from drinking any wine after dinner; alleging, that he wanted a little air, and ſhould walk.

With eager ſteps he purſued his way towards the ferry; and having croſſed it, he wound round the hill for the pur-

poſe of arriving at the back of the cottage, leſt Auguſta might, on ſeeing him, think proper to abſent herſelf.

Having come within ſight of the garden, he beheld Auguſta and Clariſſa walking.

He ſprang over the rails, and accoſted them.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Auguſta, as ſhe turned round and beheld him; "I imagined you were ſpending the day at my father's."

"I ſhould have been there till this time," replied Theodore, "but I take no pleaſure in wine: and your being abſent, ſufficiently accounts for my leaving them."

Theodore had been the ſubject of their converſation for a conſiderable part of the

the day; from which Clariſſa was able to learn that he was far from being diſagreeable to Auguſta.

"Why," ſaid Clariſſa, "ſhould Miſs Freeman's abſence plead an excuſe for your rudeneſs in leaving your company?"

"I have been guilty of none to them," replied he, "as I had their permiſſion. I can receive no pleaſure at Sir Charles's during Auguſta's abſence, except it is when I reflect it was the ſpot in which I firſt had the happineſs of beholding her."

"And is this really true?" ſaid Clariſſa; "did the ſight of Miſs Freeman afford you ſo much happineſs?"

"Fye, Clariſſa!" exclaimed Auguſta; "you will force him into ſuch a complication of falſehoods, that he will be neceſſitated to bluſh at repeating them."

"When I am guilty of that vice," rejoined Theodore, "I ſhall no doubt have occaſion to bluſh.——Yes, Miſs Leſley, I poſitively aver I never before felt a real pleaſure in the company of any one till I met Miſs Freeman."

"Why do you addreſs yourſelf to me?" ſaid Clariſſa; "I am not the perſon you wiſh to convince."

"He is aſhamed to ſay as much to me," rejoined Auguſta.—"It was but yeſterday he was declaring he had ſeen a perſon in whom all the accompliſhments of our ſex were united; and that he ſhould conſider himſelf unfit to live, if he did not feel the force of them."

"It is very true," reſumed Theodore, "and you was the perſon I alluded to; which I ſhould at the requeſt of your father have explained, had it not been

for

for the prudent caution I received from Mr. Somers.—For, oh! Miſs Freeman, to ſay I love you, is trifling to what I feel. —By Heavens! I adore you."

Now was a crimſon bluſh diffuſed over the lovely features of Auguſta. Yet could ſhe not perſuade herſelf that Freeman had impoſed on her.

"This is ſtrange," whiſpered Clariſſa, alluding to the prior engagement Auguſta had informed her of.

"Theodore," ſaid Auguſta, "you are the laſt perſon whom I expected to hear ſuch a declaration from.—My conduct has been the reſult of friendſhip; I felt for you when I conſidered your ſituation; nor did I imagine I had given you encouragement thus to treat me.—I am confident you forget yourſelf.

"It appears to me, that you ſuſpected I was here, and came this way on purpoſe to inſult me."

"Pardon me," replied Theodore, "I did ſuſpect you were here; and came this way for the purpoſe of relieving my mind from the burthen that overpowers it; but did not expect you would have taken it as an inſult.—Neither have I forgot myſelf.—It is the knowledge of what I am, that emboldens me to enter on this explanation.

"I confeſs myſelf in an error in one particular;—I ſhould firſt have found an opportunity of acquainting you with who I am; then this apparent outrage would not have appeared ſo glaring: but, I know not from what cauſe it has originated, yet you have prevented me by a ſingular coolneſs:

neſs: and when I obſerved an alteration in you, I was interrupted from ſo doing by the company preſent.

"This afternoon, I meant (prior to my entering upon any other ſubject) to have revealed myſelf to you in confidence; but my affection maſtered my reaſon, and I hope it will plead in extenuation of my offence."

"You wound me," replied Auguſta, "by ſuppoſing I alluded to your preſent ſituation.

"No explanation can do away the laſting objection I have to hearing ſuch a declaration from you; and nothing can offend me more than by perſiſting in a repetition of it.—You will therefore oblige me by dropping a ſubject ſo diſagreeable to me.

"I ſhall be happy to conſider you as

a friend, during the time you remain in the country, but nothing further."

This poſitive denial of Auguſta's, which was forced from her lips in conſequence of a firm belief that Edward had not impoſed on her, had a powerful effect on the feelings of Theodore. He turned pale, while his heart ſunk within him. He had ſcarcely taſted food ſince the preceding day; ſince which period, his mind had been in a continual ſtate of agitation: nor had he cloſed his eyes during the night.

Theſe circumſtances, combined, rendered him unable to ſupport himſelf with fortitude.

Clariſſa obſerved him to lay hold of the branches that compoſed the arbour for ſupport, at the ſame time viewing his countenance;

countenance; "Bleſs me!" exclaimed ſhe, "you are not well."

Auguſta aſſiſted her with a ſmelling-bottle, which ſhe gave him: and in a few minutes he was ſo far recovered as to be able to apologiſe for his weakneſs.

"Want of food," ſaid he, "want of reſt, and agitation of ſpirits, were too much for me.

"I am aſhamed that I ſhould thus have ſuffered my feelings to unman me."

"Make no apology," ſaid Clariſſa, "to poſſeſs an exceſs of ſenſibility is no crime; but on the contrary it ſhews you are in the poſſeſſion of a feeling heart, the greateſt ornament of human nature."

Auguſta was ſo much overpowered by this laſt ſcene, that ſhe could not articulate a ſentence.

She had liſtened to the avowal of at-

tachment from Theodore, and compared it with Freeman's aſſertion, which led her to doubt his truth, and, as ſuch, it leſſened him ſtill further in her eſtimation. But when ſhe perceived the viſible effects her refuſal had wrought upon Theodore —effects which it was not in the power of human nature to counterfeit—it carried conviction to her ſenſes, and plainly indicated that he had ſpoken his real ſentiments.

Unwilling ſtill to believe that Edward had impoſed on her, ſhe wiſhed, if poſſible, to reconcile the declaration of Theodore with the information ſhe had received, and therefore concluded that he might formerly have been attached to a perſon, but through abſence had forgotten her; and being of a ſuſceptible nature, had conceived an affection conſiſtent

ſiſtent with what he at preſent profeſſed. This by degrees relieved her from the embarraſſment the preceding ſcene had occaſioned.

"I agree with Miſs Leſley," ſaid Auguſta, "that the poſſeſſion of a feeling heart is an ornament to human nature; but it frequently happens, where a perſon is too ſuſceptible, that they transfer their affection to various objects. Not that they are to be blamed for it; it is a fault in their nature they cannot overcome; the ſame accompliſhments, although the object is different, creates the ſame ſenſations.

"This may have been the caſe with you: and when I call to my recollection a trifling converſation between my father and you, concerning a lady being the cauſe of your quitting the protection of

your

your friends, I confeſs I feel myſelf inclined to his opinion."

"You may remember," replied Theodore, "the converſation aroſe in conſequence of his diſcovering a miniature;—it was that of my mother;—I have it now with me (at the ſame time producing the caſe, which Clariſſa begged permiſſion to ſee).

"Nor am I of your opinion," continued he, "that a ſuſceptible character muſt likewiſe be an inconſtant one.

"If that were the caſe, the good would be wonderfully overbalanced by the bad; and inſtead of being an ornament to ſociety, he would be deſpicable in the eyes of the world.

"If a ſuſceptible character be ſuppoſed to feel for the ſorrows of others more acutely than individuals in general, what then

then muſt be his feelings when he looks back on the object he has deceived into affection, and afterwards cruelly abandoned?

"Believe me, no ſuch character could endure the painful recollection; he is, therefore, in compliment to his own feelings, neceſſitated to act with truth and conſtancy.

"Such is my opinion, and I truſt will always be my practice.

"As yet I have not been put to the trial, having never known what it was to feel a ſentiment of love till I was introduced to you at your father's; nor did I ever profeſs, either through compliment or gallantry, to feel what I did not poſſeſs."

There is a certain energy and force in the delivery of truth, that ſeldom fails

fails to carry conviction to the hearts of the auditors.

Auguſta had liſtened with attention to the cloſe argument of Theodore, and beheld the manly dignity which accompanied his laſt expreſſion, and which incautiouſly forced from her lips the ejaculation of, "You ſurpriſe me!"

"Why ſhould it create ſurpriſe?" rejoined Theodore; "is it a matter ſo extraordinary? and yet your countenance betokens the ſurpriſe you mention.—Oblige me by aſſigning the cauſe from whence this has its origin."

"I had been otherwiſe informed," replied Auguſta.

"What officious meddling fool has been ſurmiſing?" cried he; "or what artful villain has been undermining my peace by thus wantonly ſtabbing my character,

character, and converting ill-placed conjecture into fact?

"Oblige me ſtill farther," contined he, "by giving me the author."

Auguſta beheld the fire that beamed in the eye of Theodore, and trembled for the conſequences.

She ſaw that ſhe had gone too far, and therefore endeavoured to recede.

"It was a trifling, but *confidential* converſation," reſumed ſhe; "perhaps I may have erred; and, although it can be of no material conſequence to me, I will inveſtigate it farther."

"Daſtardly cowards," exclaimed Theodore, "who can ſtab the character of an individual behind his back, and then ſhield themſelves from correction by requiring the confidence of the hearer!"

"Perhaps I was wrong," reſumed Auguſta;

Auguſta; "let me intreat you to drop the ſubject, and devote the reſidue of the afternoon to tranquillity; after which, as you have ſtrolled this way, I ſhall requeſt you to conduct me home."

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THEODORE expreſſed the pleaſure he ſhould receive in attending her;—and then turning to Clariſſa, "Thoſe miniatures," ſaid he, "ſeem to engage your particular attention; I am confident you can have no knowledge of the originals."

"I beg your pardon," returned Clariſſa, "I am confident of having ſomewhere ſeen this gentleman, and in the ſame dreſs in which he is painted."

Theodore ſmiled. "That is impoſſible," ſaid he, "unleſs you had been to the Weſt Indies, as he has reſided there for many years."

"I beg your pardon," rejoined Clariſſa, "you are right.—It is not the gentleman

tleman I have ſeen, but the portrait of him.

"Mrs. Bentley," continued ſhe, "whoſe huſband was an officer in the army, frequently viſited a colonel at whoſe houſe I have ſeen the reſemblance of this, but as large as life;—it is Lord—Lord—Lord bleſs me, what is his title?—I cannot now recollect:—however he was the colonel's patron; for which, in token of gratitude, he has placed his lordſhip's portrait in his drawing-room."

"Your creative imagination then, it ſeems," ſaid Theodore, "has converted my father into a lord.—I feel greatly obliged to you for the honour you have conferred upon my family."

"I could have ſworn," ſaid Clariſſa, "that the portrait I mention was the original of this—or this the original of the

the portrait—or that your father was the original of both; but you ought to be the beſt judge.

"The party I allude to was certainly a nobleman, who left England to take poſſeſſion of a large eſtate in the Weſt Indies; and perhaps I may be ſtill in the right, as you have not contradicted it."

"I have not heard," replied Theodore, "of any ſuch honour having been conferred upon my father *ſince* he left England; and if there had, I muſt of courſe have been made acquainted with it."

"You ſee, Clariſſa," rejoined Auguſta, "we never ſhould be too poſitive to any thing."

"Well, ſir," reſumed Clariſſa, "your father then has the honour of being very like my Lord—dear me, what is his name?—how

how ſtrange that I cannot think of his title!—but I will ſhew it Mrs. Bentley; ſhe will aſſiſt my recollection."

"No, no," cried Theodore in haſte, "give me the miniatures, or Mrs. Bentley will be converting my poor father into an Emperor of Morocco."

As Theodore appeared earneſt in his requeſt, Clariſſa returned them.

The reſidue of the day, till the ſun was ſetting, was ſpent in general converſation. Auguſta then profeſſed an anxiety to return, and Theodore accompanied her.

Having arrived at Sir Charles's, they found the party ſtill over their bottle.

Sir Charles ſtarted up: "Now faith, Mr. Theodore," cried he, "you ſhall not eſcape us:—there ſtands your bottle of Burgundy—I inſiſt on your drinking it: what

what you ſtole a march, did you, on purpoſe to avoid it ?"

Theodore pleaded indiſpoſition; and the company interpoſing, he was content in leſſening his demand to a bumper.

" Come," cried Sir Charles, " give us for a toaſt your favourite girl;—I gueſs who it is; you appeared to have no great diſinclination to a viſit there the other morning, and it is my opinion you ſtrolled there this afternoon."

" If I have no particular favourite," replied Theodore, " I ſhall find it difficult to obey you; but I will give you the lady I viſited—Miſs Leſley."

" A charming girl!" cried Sir Thomas; " but if you were confined to the propoſed toaſt, you would, in my opinion, have given the lady you went to attend home."

Sir

Sir Charles laughed heartily. "What my Auguſta?" ſaid he. "Ah, Sir Thomas, your head will never be overburthened with too much penetration; why, man, he knows ſhe is diſpoſed of already."

"I ſhall not diſpute with you," returned Sir Thomas, "who are ſo famed for it; I merely delivered my opinion."

"Unaſked," ſaid Theodore, with warmth.

"Yes, ſir, unaſked," rejoined Sir Thomas, with equal warmth; "I hope I may have the liberty of ſo doing without aſking your conſent."

"Certainly," replied Theodore; "and as you have endeavoured to confer a favour on me, I will return it by propoſing a toaſt to be drank by you."

"That is right," "exclaimed Sir Charles, "let us have her:—fill your Glaſſes."

"Come,

"Come, Sir Thomas," reſumed Theodore, "give us the poor, ruined, and undone Miſs Bridport."

Sir Thomas ſeized a bottle that ſtood near, and roſe for the purpoſe of bringing it in contact with Theodore's head, but was prevented by Sir Charles who ſeized his arm.

In the mean time, as he held the neck of the bottle in his hand and the bottom part upwards, his courage was cooled by the contents emptying itſelf up his ſleeve.

Auguſta, not knowing the gentlemen were in their cups when ſhe entered the room, had remained a ſilent ſpectator, till obſerving Sir Thomas aiming the bottle at Theodore, ſhe then gave a loud ſcream and ſunk down through terror.

All was now a ſcene of confuſion.

Freeman, in the act of ſtarting up to aſſiſt Auguſta, overthrew the table;—the ſervants came from all parts of the houſe to her aſſiſtance.

In a ſhort time Auguſta was recovered, but nothing could reſtore the conviviality of the party.

Somers and Theodore took leave of Sir Charles; the former giving the latter a preſſing invitation to his houſe.

Sir Thomas was now left to vent his malice on the abſent party, which he did by aſſerting that Theodore was a pert boy whom Somers encouraged in his inſolence: that he was introduced in that country under very ſuſpicious circumſtances: that it was the duty of Sir Charles to have inveſtigated the cauſe for his quitting his friends—if he had any;

—but

—but for his part, he declared himſelf of opinion that he had done ſome act to forfeit all his ties of friendſhip, or otherwiſe he would not be ſo careful in concealing the knowledge of it from every individual.

Freeman defended the character of Theodore as far as his ſmall acquaintance with him would permit; declared he conſidered his opinions ill founded, and that he ought at all events to be conſidered innocent till ſome ſpecies of guilt could be proved.

"That I admit," rejoined Sir Thomas; "but in the mean time you may be courting the acquaintance of a pick-pocket or a common ſwindler."

"You are too hard upon Theodore," ſaid Sir Charles, "he has not the appear-

ance of ſuch a character; any perſon may ſee he is a gentleman by his manners, and I am confident he has received a liberal education."

"As to his appearance denoting him a gentleman," replied Sir Thomas, "ſo did the famous Barrington's. You ſay he has received a liberal education; if he has (and I am much inclined to doubt it), it is then a certain proof his friends have done their duty by him, and affords a ſtrong argument againſt him; for is it to be ſuppoſed, that thoſe friends who have been ſo mindful of his future happineſs, ſhould now be endeavouring to plot his deſtruction, as he would inſinuate?—He calls upon you to admit him to your acquaintance—your houſe—and your family.

"He

"He is little more than a boy, yet expects that you are to have a full confidence in him.

"What confidence will he repoſe in you?—None.—Guilt is ever aſhamed to ſhew its face;—and this accounts for his ſilence: but he can be bold enough where he has no occaſion.

"Did it follow, becauſe I propoſed your daughter to him for a toaſt, that he ſhould in return propoſe to me a common woman?

"This, ſir, was what enraged me; I could not bear to hear her put in compariſon with the dregs of ſociety."

"Sir Thomas," cried Freeman, "if you perſiſt in thus calumniating Theodore, I ſhall be driven to the neceſſity of explaining who the perſon is that he propoſed to you.

"As to his having the ſmalleſt idea of conveying an offence to my couſin, I am confident he had not, as no perſon can ſtand higher in his eſtimation than Auguſta."

"There you are right," cried Sir Thomas, "at leaſt; having her father's fortune in his eye, he endeavours to worm himſelf into her favour, while his hours of ſoft dalliance are ſpent with the agreeable cottager on the hill; and thus, like a truly faſhionable young man, he is catering for a wife and a faſcinating convenient object at the ſame time."

Freeman darted a look of contempt on him for this laſt remark concerning Clariſſa, and replied, "That as ſhe was an acquaintance of Auguſta's, and had no one to defend her, he would do it with his life againſt any one who dared

dared to breathe an inſinuation againſt her."

"You ſurpriſe me!" cried Sir Charles: "What is the meaning of this?—Sir Thomas, I muſt needs ſay, carries his inveteracy againſt Theodore too far, and his ſuſpicions reſpecting others are certainly ill-founded.—But there is no occaſion for tilting ſwords, I hope, or exchanging ſhot.—Come, we will have another bottle, and drink oblivion to all this nonſence and rancour" (at the ſame time ringing the bell, and ordering a ſervant to produce it).

Sir Thomas was not aware that Freeman would have been ſo ready to ſtand up in defence of Clariſſa; or probably he never would have thrown out an alluſion againſt her. He therefore thought it neceſſary to leſſen the force of his ex-

preſſion, by explaining.—"You wrong me," reſumed he, "if you ſuppoſe I meant to inſinuate any thing to the diſadvantage of the young lady in queſtion; I believe her to be an amiable character; yet it does not follow but that Theodore, prompted by her beauty and her poverty, may have an inclination to make her otherwiſe."

Freeman, after declaring he did not believe Theodore had any ſuch an idea, thought proper to accept this explanation as an apology.

The converſation was here put an end to at the requeſt of Sir Charles.

Sir Thomas, after taking a glaſs of wine, and promiſing to attend him on the enſuing day to ſome of the principal tenants on the eſtate he had purchaſed, took his leave.

When

When Sir Thomas was gone, Auguſta entered the room, and Sir Charles began by obſerving to Freeman that what had fell from Sir Thomas concerning Theodore had left a ſtrong impreſſion on his mind; "I wiſh," continued he, "I had not given him a general invitation to my houſe, till I had received ſome ſatisfactory account concerning him."

Auguſta defended him with all the rhetoric ſhe was miſtreſs of; but Sir Charles's penetration had been ſet to work, and it was not all that ſhe or Freeman could advance, that would make the leaſt difference in him. "He had," he ſaid, "come to a determination not to repeat his invitation, till he ſhould be ſatisfied concerning ſome doubts that had ariſen in his mind."

"Let your conduct be what it may,"

rejoined Freeman, "I ſhall certainly cultivate his acquaintance.—He is a valuable young man, and I am not the leaſt fearful of having my morals corrupted by his ſociety."

"Do as you pleaſe," reſumed Sir Charles, "but do not introduce him here, unleſs you find him inclined to truſt me with ſome further particulars reſpecting himſelf."

Auguſta ſuggeſted to her father the impropriety of forbidding him the houſe, after he had ſo preſſingly entreated his company; and likewiſe hinted at the offence it would in all probability convey to Mr. Somers, at whoſe houſe he was, and who thought him deſerving of his protection.

Sir Charles replied, that he ſhould ſtate to Mr. Somers the motives for his conduct,

which

which he was determined not to alter, as he had made up his mind.

Thus was Theodore, through the machinations of Sir Thomas, ſhut out from the houſe; and of courſe deprived of an opportunity of ſeeing Auguſta, unleſs by accident.

CHAP. IV.

ON the enſuing morning, Freeman and Auguſta being together without the company of a third perſon, ſhe thought it a favourable opportunity to aſk him farther reſpecting the lady he had informed her of, that occaſioned Theodore to leave his uncle's protection. "I am rather inclined to doubt your aſſertion," ſaid ſhe, "concerning the lady you mentioned that Theodore was engaged to, or otherwiſe you would have explained as much to my father, as it fully accounts for his quitting his home."

"Theodore would not have thanked me," replied Freeman, "for conveying the intelligence.—You may remember he denied

denied it to Sir Charles when he charged him with it."

"Do you then mean to inſiſt," reſumed Auguſta, "that he is really engaged?"

"I ſee plainly," returned Freeman, "you have a ſtrong deſire to know; and if you will ingenuouſly tell me from whence this deſire originates, I will deal as ingenuouſly by you in return, and ſtate who the lady is that holds him in her chains."

"Then there really is a lady?" reſumed ſhe.

"As certain," replied Freeman, "as you ſit there: I had it from his own lips."

"This world is full of deception," ſaid Auguſta, "and Theodore is a maſterpiece of it."

"You would make an excellent couple," rejoined he: "if I do not miſtake, you

you are another.—You are endeavouring to deceive me, but cannot, as I clearly ſee you have formed an attachment for him."

"I ſhould indeed have reaſon to regret," reſumed ſhe, "if that were the caſe: your wiſdom is miſtaken for once."

"Then," replied Freeman, "you may depend that all I told you of Theodore is true."

"I make not the leaſt doubt of it," rejoined Auguſta, "as I believe you would on no account perſevere in a falſhood."

"No more than you would," rejoined Freeman.—"But I muſt be gone to Somers'; I mean to breakfaſt with him this morning.

"Have you any tender enquiries to make concerning Theodore's health? or is there any thing you wiſh me to ſay in your

your behalf?—Believe me, I will plead your cauſe with him, as I gueſs how it is with you."

"Edward," ſaid Auguſta, "do not tantalize me, but treat me as a friend."

"My conduct," replied he, "ſhall be the exact copy of yours.

"You have forgotten to treat me as your friend, by not acting ingenuouſly with me, and have endeavoured to impoſe upon my underſtanding by perſiſting in an untruth.—Let me experience from you the ſame candour, the ſame open freedom of ſpeech I uſed to meet with, and you will find it as amply returned by me;—till which time you muſt excuſe me.

"Not that I mean to inſinuate that what I told you concerning Theodore is untrue;

untrue;—you know I ſcorn an untruth as much as you do."

Freeman now left her for the purpoſe of purſuing his walk, while Auguſta ſtood confounded at the deception of mankind.

Theodore had appeared to her to poſſeſs a ſoul fraught with many valuable ſentiments.

If, therefore, ſuch a character could deceive her, and even work up his feelings to the higheſt pitch—even to fainting, in order to add to his deception—where muſt ſhe then look for the truth? She reviewed the conduct of Freeman; he was her relation; had always been her friend, and ever dealt by her with the utmoſt candour.

Thus did ſhe ruminate, without conſi-

dering

dering ſeriouſly what Edward had advanced, or that his conduct in this inſtance was the reſult of her own. As to want of candour on her part, ſhe perfectly excuſed herſelf from it, in conſequence of the difference of ſex.

It would, ſhe thought, be improper to relate her ſentiments on ſo delicate a ſubject to Edward. And if ſhe had been inclined, her diffidence would have prevented her.

This idea never entered into his mind; he recollected that his couſin had been in the habit of entruſting him with her ſentiments on the moſt trivial ſubjects that hitherto had occupied her thoughts, and therefore could plead no excuſe for her in this particular. He did not take into conſideration that this was an affair totally new to her, or that her diffidence or

delicacy

delicacy would prevent an explanation.

This it was that made him perſevere in the fable, by way of puniſhing her, for witholding that confidence which he conſidered himſelf entitled to.

Auguſta having wrought up her mind to a firm belief that Theodore had impoſed on her, now looked on his conduct as an inſult; and having called in a ſpark of pride to her aid, ſhe determined never again to truſt herſelf in his company.

Sir Thomas made his appearance for the purpoſe of taking an early ride with Sir Charles, and having breakfaſted, Auguſta was left alone to confirm herſelf in the unfavourable impreſſion ſhe had received.

In the mean time Freeman viſited Somers, and

and imparted to him a portion of the converſation that paſſed the preceding evening relative to Theodore, requeſting he would endeavour to prevent his viſits till Sir Charles ſhould alter his opinion. After which he haſtened to Mrs. Bentley's cottage, and finding Clariſſa alone, he laboured to remove thoſe objections ſhe had raiſed againſt his propoſals, but was equally unſucceſsful as on his former viſit, except that he thought he could diſcern a ſpark of affection in her eye; and concluded from ſome words which had fallen, that if his father could be brought to approve of their union, the grand obſtacle would be removed.

Clariſſa during his viſit treated him with every mark of friendſhip and eſteem; and Edward having made his ſtay as long as he could with propriety, returned to Sir

Charles,

Charles, where he found Auguſta and her father in converſation, which from the appearance of both parties he judged to be of an unpleaſant nature, but it was dropt on his entrance.

Sir Thomas had, during his ride, endeavoured to excite all the hatred and contempt he could in the breaſt of Sir Charles againſt Theodore.

He aſſerted, that from his obſervation, he was poſitive there was no attachment exiſting between Auguſta and Freeman; but that, on the contrary, ſhe harboured an affection for Theodore. To prove this, he reminded him of a variety of circumſtances which, although trifling of themſelves, yet when added together left an unfavourable impreſſion.

"If," continued he, "Theodore could prove himſelf to be upon an equality with

with your daughter, and were a character deſerving of her, I ſhould not, whatever may be my ſentiments reſpecting her, advance one word againſt him, but I am poſitive to the contrary. You may depend he has ſomewhere ſeen the cottager, Miſs Leſley. And having heard of the ridiculous character of Somers, and his ill-timed benevolence, he thought, by practiſing on his credulity, to obtain a footing in his houſe, which could not fail of introducing him to her acquaintance, and afford him an opportunity of carrying ſome infamous plan into execution.

" This introduction to Somers, together with his apprehenſion which occaſioned his being brought before you, has been the means likewiſe of introducing him to the acquaintance of your daughter; and

and being a keen ſportſman, and perhaps a needy fortune hunter, he could not ſuffer ſo rich a prize to eſcape him, but has laid plans to enſnare her affection; and I would anſwer with my life, if ſhe could be prevailed upon to confeſs the truth, ſhe would acknowledge it."

"If one half of what you have aſſerted be true," exclaimed Sir Charles, "he is the greateſt villain in exiſtance."

"I have no doubt," reſumed Sir Thomas, "but you will find it to be the caſe; and ſhould it prove as I have ſuggeſted, as likewiſe that all proſpect of an union between Auguſta and your nephew ſhould fail, I hope I ſhall then be able to prevail on you to liſten to a propoſal from me."

"Name it," ſaid Sir Charles.

"That I may," reſumed he, "have your permiſſion

permiſſion to pay my addreſſes to Auguſta."

"I am not prepared," replied Sir Charles, "to receive a propoſal from you of this nature, as I have not inveſtigated this buſineſs fully.

"Whatever may be the villany of Theodore, I think he never has been able to impoſe upon my daughter. On the contrary, I have every reaſon to believe ſhe has a laſting attachment for Edward, and that their attachment is mutual; but ſhould I have been deceived, I will then conſider ſeriouſly of your propoſal, and give you my anſwer upon it."

Sir Charles's mind having been effectually poiſoned by theſe inſinuations, he took the earlieſt opportunity of leaving him for the purpoſe of conſulting with Auguſta; and on his return, finding her alone,

alone, he without any preface desired she would answer one question with candour.

"Has Theodore Somers," said he, "professed an attachment for you, or made you any proposal?"

Augusta was not prepared for this question. She blushed and hesitated, but could not articulate a reply. This conduct in her led Sir Charles to suspect the fact; which so far enraged him, that he vociferated, "Answer me this instant, for, by Heaven, I will know the truth!"

Terrified, and not knowing how to find a subterfuge, she replied in a low tone, "Yes."

"I knew it!" cried Sir Charles; "and you tamely submitted to be insulted by the addresses of an infamous scoundrel, and one who turns out to be a base impostor?"

"Good

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Auguſta, "an impoſter?"

"Yes, yes," reſumed Sir Charles, "I have every reaſon to believe as much; and before long, depend on it, you will find my aſſertions true."

The entrance of Edward put an end to this converſation, as Sir Charles did not think proper to purſue it before him, leſt it ſhould leſſen Auguſta in his eſtimation; nor had he an opportunity of renewing it, as Freeman remained with Auguſta till ſhe retired in the evening.

CHAP. V.

ON the enſuing day, Auguſta, who wiſhed to relate to Clariſſa what had eſcaped the lips of her father, took the earlieſt opportunity of viſiting her.

Theodore, in the mean time, had been informed by Somers of the alteration wrought in Sir Charles, through the interference of Sir Thomas, and had ſpent a ſolitary day.

Hitherto he had not been debarred from ſeeing Auguſta, unleſs it was through a penance he impoſed on himſelf; but, on the contrary, had received a general invitation to the houſe; he was, therefore, not prepared to ſuſtain the ſhock occaſioned by a denial.

To

To ſee her he was reſolved on; but how to accompliſh this he could not tell.

To be ſeen walking near the houſe was degrading to his pride; and from the ſhort acquaintance he had with her he knew of no place where ſhe viſited, except at the cottage.

Thither he determined to bend his courſe on the enſuing morning.

Clariſſa was alone, and complained of an unuſual depreſſion on her ſpirits; nor was Theodore in a ſtate of mind capable of chaſing away her melancholy.

He informed her of the unfortunate miſconception of Sir Charles, and the conſequences attendant on it.

Clariſſa, on her part, promiſed to ſee Auguſta, and remove any unfavourable impreſſion from her mind which the ſug-

geſtions of her father or Sir Thomas might have occaſioned; and Theodore in return authoriſed her to inform Auguſta, that he would in confidence, whenever ſhe would honour him with a hearing, ſtate to her his family and connections.

During this converſation Auguſta made her appearance; ſhe ſtarted on ſeeing Theodore, and would have retreated, but he ran towards her, and requeſted ſhe would indulge him with her company for a few minutes.

"My father," replied Auguſta, "has been made acquainted with your ſentiments, and has deſired me never to enter into a place where you are; and having no wiſh on my part, I can the more readily oblige him. I muſt therefore requeſt you will withdraw, or permit me ſo to do."

"My

"My dear Miſs Freeman," ſaid Clariſſa, "Theodore has certainly been miſrepreſented to you or to your father by Sir Thomas, and he is anxious for an opportunity of clearing himſelf."

"If my father," reſumed Auguſta, "had not forbid me on pain of his diſpleaſure ever to ſee this gentleman again, I ſhould even then, on my own part, feel ſtrongly inclined to ſhun his ſociety; he muſt therefore excuſe me from liſtening to any converſation from him."

Theodore, on hearing this reply, threw himſelf on a chair in the corner of the room, and drew out his handkerchief to wipe a tear from his eye, that otherwiſe would have expoſed itſelf by trickling down his cheek.

This action did not eſcape the notice of Auguſta, and forced a ſigh from her

heart, notwithſtanding all her efforts to the contrary.

To prevent another accident of a ſimilar nature, ſhe requeſted the company of Clariſſa in the garden for a few minutes.

Theodore, during her abſence, employed himſelf in writing a ſong, deſcriptive of his feelings and what he thought would affect the benevolent heart of Auguſta.

Clariſſa in the mean time endeavoured to defend Theodore from the aſperſions that had been thrown out againſt him; and ſo far ſoftened her reſentment, that ſhe prevailed on her to return to the houſe.

Auguſta having ſeated herſelf, Clariſſa, to afford Theodore an opportunity of pleading in his own behalf, excuſed herſelf from remaining with them while ſhe

went

went to Mrs. Bentley, alleging that ſhe ſhould be abſent but for a few minutes.

Auguſta, not thinking it prudent to remain with him during her abſence, replied that ſhe would walk in the garden till ſhe returned.

Theodore followed her, and requeſted ſhe would do him the favour to ſtate the charges that had been alleged againſt him, that he might have an opportunity of doing himſelf juſtice.

"It can be of no importance," replied Auguſta, "as from this day I never will ſee or converſe with you more; nor would I on any account have my father made acquainted with my ſeeing you here to-day."

"Then," replied Theodore, "muſt I

bid a long, and, perhaps, a final farewel to happineſs.

" I had fondly hoped that you would have heard my ſtory, and that the recital would have altered your opinion concerning me.

" I have ventured to declare my attachment for you;—this you deem an inſult, and your father has forbid me his houſe.

" He ſuſpects I am by birth unworthy of you, and views me in the light of an impoſtor.

" This I could do away, but you refuſe to hear me.

" You declare I have entered into engagements with another; it is, therefore, no wonder you think my addreſſes an inſult.

" I can

"I can only aver in vindication of myſelf that it is totally without foundation.

"How I am to exiſt under your diſpleaſure, and without ſeeing you, I know not; at preſent it appears impoſſible.

"I fear my affection is too deeply rooted ever to admit of it; but time will ſhew it."

"Yes, ſir," rejoined Auguſta, "time *will* ſhew it; you will as eaſily recover from it as you have done formerly on ſimilar occaſions, therefore take no heed of the conſequences."

Clariſſa had returned from Mrs. Bentley, and obſerving the ſong Theodore had compoſed laying on the table, ſhe read it, and following him into the garden requeſted Theodore would ſing it, to which requeſt he aſſented.

Auguſta ſeated herſelf by the ſide of Clariſſa, in the arbour.

Theodore had compoſed the ſong after the manner, and to the tune, of a ſong in the entertainment called The Children in the Wood; the firſt two lines of which run thus:

"That look of tender woe,
Thy fatal tale preceding."

He addreſſed himſelf to Auguſta, while he ſung as follows:

By yonder moſſy hill
Sad Strephon ſtood reclining,
And view'd the murmering rill,
His future fate divining;
Cried, Hear, oh hear my prayer;
Oh, Celia, eaſe my anguiſh;
My heart's oppreſs'd with care,
Ah, bid it ceaſe to languiſh.
Oh, my love—my love!

But

But ſtill he ſighed in vain;
To love ſhe ſeem'd a ſtranger,
And heeded not his pain,
But, careleſs of his danger,
Refus'd to hear his prayer,
Or eaſe his load of ſorrow,
Till, drove by dark deſpair,
And every kind of horror,
He ſought a wat'ry grave.

His fate ſoon ſpread around,
And ſwiftly Celia caught it;
What, is my Strephon drown'd?
Oh, Heav'n, who could have thought it!
Why was my cruel fate
Not deſtin'd to obtain him?—
Her tears were then too late,
She never could regain him.
Ah, ſad effects of love!

The harmonious voice of Theodore was infinitely ſuperior to his poetry. The plaintive and tender eloquence

which accompanied his words, while a tear ſtood trembling on his eye-lid, had nearly deprived Auguſta of her fortitude; but, recollecting herſelf, ſhe ſtarted up—"Clariſſa," ſaid ſhe, "I muſt be gone.—My father will be anxious."

"Miſs Freeman," rejoined Theodore, "I will not be ſo rude as to drive you hence.

"You wiſh my abſence."

Then, with the tears ſtarting from his eye, while the fulneſs of his heart almoſt choaked his utterance, he articulated, "Farewel—perhaps for ever."

Auguſta kept her eyes fixed upon him till he had left the gate, and then turning to Clariſſa, with a pale languor on her countenance that alarmed her, exclaimed, "'Tis paſt."

"Good

"Good Heaven," ſaid Clariſſa, "you are ill; ſhall I get you any thing?"

"No," replied Auguſta; "I have had a hard ſtruggle with my feelings, and now I will give them vent."

"If after all," ſaid Clariſſa, "you ſhould have been impoſed upon?"

"No," returned Auguſta, "Edward would never impoſe on me.

"It is not for the ſufferings of Theodore I feel; he, I am aſſured from his paſt conduct, will ſoon forget it; and I have a doubt whether he feels what he ſpeaks.—It is not that: but long, very long I fear, it will be before I regain that peace of mind I enjoyed ere I beheld him. I fear the name of Theodore will live in my remembrance as long as my ſorrows will permit me to exiſt."

"I never

"I never can believe," reſumed Clariſſa, "that Theodore has deceived you."

"Ah, my God!" exclaimed Auguſta, burſting into tears, "do not perſuade me to the contrary.

"I ſhould run diſtracted at the recollection of my conduct if I thought ſo."

"Then will I ſay no more upon the ſubject," reſumed Clariſſa; "for either way I am ſure to make you unhappy."

"Yes," rejoined Auguſta, "indulge me by ſpeaking of him.—I can think of nothing elſe."

"See where he ſits on yonder hill," reſumed Clariſſa, looking out of the door; "perhaps he will return."

"If he ſhould," cried Auguſta, "ſhew him in.

"I do not think I ſaid any thing at parting.

parting.—It was impolite, and looked unfriendly;—I ſhall not forgive myſelf unleſs I repair this error. Heaven knows, I wiſh him well."

"He will not return," ſaid Clariſſa.—"He has got up, and now he walks homewards."

Auguſta flew to the door.

"See," continued Clariſſa, "how attentively he is looking down on the river.—Obſerve him—he runs."

"Clariſſa," ſaid Auguſta, "I cannot ſtay longer:—I will go; and if I ſhould happen to find him at the ferry, I will part more friendly with him; do you not think I ought?"

"Indeed I think," replied Clariſſa, "that Theodore is all truth; I never will believe he has deceived you.—You did not notice him as he ſpoke, but I am

ſure

ſure each word ſeemed to come from his heart."

"Well, I cannot ſtay," reſumed Auguſta, "I will ſee you again to-morrow."

"Hold," cried Clariſſa, "here is the ſong that Theodore compoſed."

Auguſta took it, and then haſtened over the hill that leads to the ferry, but Theodore was not to be ſeen: ſhe looked around her in every direction, and enquired of the ferryman if he had paſſed, but was anſwered in the negative.

She walked near the place, aſcended another hill, and beguiled the time away, thinking he might have walked to compoſe his ſpirits, and ſhortly would return.

At length, having ſtaid about half an hour, ſhe croſſed the ferry, although not without ſome anxious fears for his ſafety, and

and returned to her father's, where ſhe ſhut herſelf up in her chamber to give vent to her tears, in which ſituation ſhe remained till her company was requeſted at dinner.

She obeyed the ſummons, and found Sir Thomas in company with her father and Edward.

Sir Charles obſerved the alteration in her countenance.

It was viſible to all that ſhe had been in tears.

Her eyes were red and rather ſwelled; her dreſs, through neglect, was diſordered; and her features ſtrongly pourtrayed the feelings of her mind.

Sir Charles, as Freeman and Sir Thomas were preſent, contented himſelf by ſaying ſhe did not appear well.

Auguſta replied ſhe was not. Edward helped her to the wing of a fowl, which to avoid ſuſpicion ſhe taſted; but recollection, like a torrent that drives every thing before it, recalled to her mind that ſhe was never again to behold Theodore, and forcing the tears again into her eyes, ſhe aroſe from the table and retired.

Edward beheld with torturing anxiety the altered appearance of Auguſta. He took the earlieſt opportunity of following her, and found her ſeated in a temple in the garden.

"My dear couſin," ſaid he, "why are you thus oppreſt? Speak to me, have I the power to alleviate this ....

"Edward," ſhe replied, "I am aſhamed of my weakneſs; but you, who know what it is to feel a ſtrong affection, will, I hope,

I hope, excuſe me ;—I can no longer withold from you the cauſe—'tis Theodore."

"Ha! what of him?" cried Edward haſtily—"Has he uſed you ill?—ſpeak ; by Heaven I will make him rue the hour he did ſo."

Here Edward pauſed. "But that is impoſſible," ſaid he ; "he loves you too much to uſe you ill, or to venture at inſulting you. His heart is the ſeat of truth and virtue."

"Hold, Edward," exclaimed Auguſta, "can he be this, and addreſs me while he is engaged to another?—Impoſſible!"

"My life upon it," replied Edward, "he never was engaged to another, nor ever felt what it was to love till he beheld you.

"The

"The ſtory was entirely of my own fabrication.

"You may remember you withheld your confidence from me, I therefore ſtrove to gain the ſecret by other means; and when I thought myſelf wrong, I was aſhamed to confeſs my ſtratagem, leſt you ſhould laugh at me for my error."

Edward might as well have talked to the paſſing breeze. Auguſta was unable to hear further than that the ſtory was falſe, and had fainted.

On obſerving the effect his words had on her, he took her in his arms, and ſpeedily conveyed her to the houſe without the knowledge of her father, where, with the aſſiſtance of Ellen, ſhe was ſhortly recovered.

As ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, ſhe cried,

"Edward,

"Edward, you have uſed me ill;—you ſhould have conſidered this was a ſubject I could not intruſt to you, nor ſhould I now have uttered a ſentence, but that we have parted—never to meet again; and my heart, unable to bear its load, ſought refuge in you."

"Come, come," reſumed Freeman, "be compoſed, all will yet be well.—I ſhall viſit Theodore in the morning, and in a jocoſe manner relate the ſtratagem I made uſe of.

"You may depend on it he ſhall not know from me your ſentiments in his favour.—I will appoint to meet him at the cottage in the afternoon, and as you are in the habit of viſiting Clariſſa, it will be your own fault if you do not ſee him."

"You would fain ſooth me into happineſs," reſumed Auguſta, "but that is impoſſible;

poſſible; I have ſo great a dread on my ſpirits, I cannot ſurmount it."

"Why this dread?" rejoined Edward. —"What have you to fear?"

Auguſta produced the ſong which Theodore had compoſed.

Edward read it, and forcing a ſmile into his countenance, "This is nothing," ſaid he, "but the mere effuſions of fancy. —He wrote it to pourtray his feelings.

"He is too ſenſible a young man, and has too high a ſenſe of religion, to put it in practice."

"There is my hope," reſumed Auguſta; "but yet I followed him from the cottage to the ferry, and muſt have overtaken him had he not hid himſelf, or done what I dread to think of."

"Did you aſk the ferryman if he had paſſed?" ſaid Edward.

"I did,"

"I did," replied ſhe, "but he had not ſeen him ſince the morning."

"Compoſe yourſelf," reſumed Edward; "he had only walked perhaps over the hill to alleviate his mind before he returned."

"Thither I went likewiſe," rejoined Auguſta, "but could ſee nothing of him."

"He is ſafe enough," ſaid Freeman; "I'll anſwer for it, I find him with Somers; dry up your tears, aſſume a cheerful countenance, and return to the company.—I will attend you, and after excuſing myſelf to them, will go in ſearch of him."

Auguſta, on the receipt of this promiſe, endeavoured to obey.

She walked a few minutes in the garden, while Edward made uſe of every argument,

ment to do away the unpleaſant and dreadful ſuſpicion that had taken poſſeſſion of her, till at length he in a great meaſure ſucceeded.

Accordingly as ſhe got rid of this fear, ſo on the other hand did the natural pride and delicacy of her ſex begin to return.

She cautioned Edward to let his viſit at Somers's wear the appearance of chance, and not to expreſs an anxiety either on his or her behalf, leſt it ſhould create ſuſpicion in them; at the ſame time, not to forget the anxiety he had left her in, but to take the earlieſt opportunity he could, conſiſtent with prudence, to return.

Edward promiſed to obey her commands with punctuality; and Auguſta having, through the aſſurances of Edward, regained a conſiderable portion of fortitude,

tude, and forced an eaſe into her countenance ſhe was far from experiencing, returned with him to her father and Sir Thomas, who congratulated her on her recovery.

Edward, after taking a glaſs of wine, left them, promiſing to return in half an hour.

Auguſta viewed her watch, leſt in his abſence the time ſhould ſeem longer than uſual.

Sir Charles, who was anxious to know the cauſe of her uneaſineſs, requeſted ſhe would inform him where ſhe had been in the morning.

Auguſta replied, that ſhe had viſited Miſs Leſley.

"I hope ſhe is perfectly well?" rejoined Sir Thomas.

"Indifferent," replied Auguſta; "ſhe

complains of an unuſual depreſſion on her ſpirits."

"Vapours, mere vapours," ſaid Sir Thomas; "or perhaps the lady is in love. —Do you know if the young man—Theodore I think they call him—has been there this morning?"

Auguſta bluſhed, and then turned pale through recollection.

She heſitated, fearing leſt her father ſhould be offended if he thought ſhe had met him.

At length ſhe replied, that "Miſs Leſley had informed her he had called in the morning."

"It was very conſiderate of him," whiſpered Sir Thomas to Sir Charles as he ſat next him.

"Why, yes, I think ſo," replied Sir Charles, in a low tone.

"I preſume

"I preſume then," ſaid Sir Thomas, addreſſing himſelf to Auguſta, "the lovers have had a quarrel."

Auguſta looked ſurpriſed. "I beg your pardon," ſaid ſhe, "I do not underſtand you."

"Mr. Theodore and the young woman at the cottage have had ſome words together," rejoined Sir Thomas, "which I ſhould ſuppoſe has depreſſed her ſpirits."

Auguſta ſmiled at the apparent ill-founded ſuſpicion of Sir Thomas; but not feeling herſelf inclined to purſue the converſation by doing it away, ſhe replied, "I have heard nothing of it."

"That it is very likely," ſaid Sir Thomas, "and yet my ſuſpicion may be true; as I am of opinion, let him addreſs who he may on the ſcore of fortune, ſhe is the party that poſſeſſes his affection, or I

have been wrongly informed.—What think you, Sir Charles?"

"I am exactly of your opinion," replied he.

Sir Thomas now looked towards Auguſta with a degree of ſelf-ſatisfaction in his countenance, and aſſumed a vacant ſmile to ſhew his teeth, which Auguſta anſwered by a ſmile of contempt; yet thinking the unjuſt ſuſpicion he had thrown upon Theodore deſerved a reply, ſhe added, that ſhe conſidered him incapable of informing her what paſſed in the heart of Theodore.

"Perhaps, Miſs Freeman," rejoined Sir Thomas rather ironically, "you are the beſt judge; but will you do me the favour to ſtate why you think my ſuſpicions untrue."

Auguſta ſaw the drift of his queſtion, and

and witneſſed the ſarcaſtic ſmile that was diſtinguiſhable on his features, ſhe therefore replied, "Becauſe, ſir, I think it impoſſible for a vicious heart to diſtinguiſh what are the feelings of a virtuous one."

"Very good, very good," returned Sir Thomas, laughing; "I give you great credit, Miſs Freeman, for the ſmart retort. —We ſhall ſee who is right in time.—Time will ſhew it.

"Yes, ſir," rejoined Auguſta, "time will ſhew it." Then recollecting theſe laſt words were thoſe made uſe of to her in the morning by Theodore, and her ſuſpicions reviving again, ſhe heaved a ſigh, and viewed her watch: the time for Edward's return was nearly expired.

She roſe, and walked to the window.

The evening was faſt approaching. She could diſtinguiſh no diſtinct object.

The time hung heavy.—She wiſhed to avoid all farther converſation with Sir Thomas, ſince he choſe ſo unpleaſant a ſubject, therefore, taking the ſong from her boſom written by Theodore, ſhe ſat down and played the ſame tune in which he ſung it. This, together with the anxiety of her mind on account of Edward's long abſence, was almoſt too much for her ſpirits.

She returned the ſong to its former envied ſtation, and was endeavouring to fortify and recruit her ſpirits, when the name of Somers was announced.

CHAP. VI.

SOMERS entered with a countenance that beſpoke ſorrow, anxiety, and vexation.

He enquired, if any one preſent could inform him of Clariſſa or of Theodore.

At this juncture Freeman, who had been to the lodge, entered. They had not met with each other, as Somers had but then come from the cottage.

"What of Clariſſa?" ſaid Freeman.

"She is miſſing," replied Somers: "I have been with Mrs. Bentley, who is nearly diſtracted on her account, as ſhe left her home in the afternoon, ſaying ſhe was ſent for by me, and has not ſince returned."

"You ſurpriſe me," cried Freeman.

"In addition to this," reſumed Somers, "Theodore, who I am confident would not have diſappointed me at dinner, unleſs ſome unforeſeen accident had happened, is likewiſe miſſing."

Auguſta imagined all her fears were realiſed.

She put no faith in what had been related by Sir Thomas, but concluded he had thrown himſelf into the river.

Unable to ſuſtain herſelf under ſo afflicting an idea, ſhe ſunk on a chair in the corner of the room, and fainted, unnoticed by any one.

"Now, Sir Charles," cried Sir Thomas, alluding to the information brought by Somers, "I hope you will believe there was ſome foundation for my ſuſpicions."

"What

"What ſuſpicions?" cried Freeman haſtily; "where do you ſuſpect ſhe is?"

Sir Thomas replied by making uſe of the ſame arguments he had uſed to poiſon the mind of Sir Charles.

Freeman had ſcarcely patience to hear him, and rejoined with marked acrimony, "They know beſt how to ſuſpect, who have been guilty of a ſimilar conduct.

"Theodore would ſcorn ſuch an atrocious act.—But if he were baſe enough to attempt it, think you Clariſſa, who abhors vice as much you do virtue, could ever conſent to a propoſal ſo infamous?"

"Sir Thomas," ſaid Somers, "I have liſtened with ſilent horror to the abominable inſinuations made uſe of by you againſt Theodore.

"I have ever made it a remark, that the parties on whom guilt ought to attach,

are the firſt to accuſe others, and raiſe improbable ſuſpicions, that themſelves may remain undetected. I have a letter in my poſſeſſion, that has been ſent to London, and has on it the Briſtol poſt mark.

"This letter, which is anonymous, I verily believe to be your hand-writing, and was ſent to give Theodore's relations an information where to find him.

"If a poor man had done this, he would, in his letter, have claimed the reward, and pointed out a place where it could be ſent him.

"If a rich one had done it with a good intent, why did he ſcreen his name? Add to this, both the ſtyle and letters are exactly like yours.

"As to Clariſſa, perhaps you can beſt inform us what is become of her.—You

may

may remember, I found you a few days back at the cottage.

" Men of your libertine principles are not partial to the enjoyment of a walk in an unfrequented part of the country, unleſs they have ſome plan in view. You have, it ſeems, before ſuggeſted, that Clariſſa would elope, and had the aſſurance to name Theodore as the man with whom ſhe would purſue a vicious courſe.

" Under his name you meant to ſcreen the vice you wiſh to practiſe."

Freeman, who was wrought up to the greateſt pitch of rage againſt Sir Thomas by the arguments of Somers, without ſtaying till he had finiſhed them, ſprung over the chairs, and ſeizing him by his cravat, " Monſter," cried he, " tell me where ſhe is, or I will ſhake this gingerbread frame of yours into atoms!"

Sir Charles interpoſed, and inſiſted on Edward leaving him, while he inveſtigated the buſineſs.

As ſoon as Sir Thomas could recover his breath, which was nearly gone through the graſp of Freeman, he begged to be heard.

"As to the letter," ſaid he, "I ſolemnly proteſt I know nothing of it; and with reſpect to my running away with the young lady, it is contrary to common ſenſe. Sir Charles can teſtify, that I have been here ever ſince the morning; and Miſs Freeman was with her but a few hours back; therefore my innocence is as plain as is the unwarrantable inſolence I have been obliged to endure."

"Sir Charles," ſaid Somers, "permit me to aſk you one queſtion.

"Did Sir Thomas come here this day by

by your invitation, or for the purpoſe of ſettling any buſineſs?"

"Neither that I know of," replied Sir Charles.

"Now, let me aſk," reſumed Somers, "is it likely, if Sir Thomas intended to force Clariſſa from Mrs. Bentley's, that he would be ſeen in the tranſaction? or is it not more likely that he ſhould employ ſome wretch diveſted of principle to perform it for him?—And that his character might go unimpeached by Miſs Leſley's friends, was it not neceſſary he ſhould ſpend the day with them to avoid ſuſpicion?"

Freeman thought he diſcovered a trait of conſcious guilt in the features of Sir Thomas, and exclaimed, "By Heaven your are right!"

Then ſeizing Sir Thomas by his collar, and

and driving him up againſt the wall, declared if he did not inſtantly reveal where ſhe was, he would knock him down.

Sir Charles, in attempting to part them, diſcovered his daughter, who he did not recollect was in the room.

Every other conſideration now gave way to the ſituation of Auguſta.

Various ſervants attended, and every means within their power was uſed for her recovery; but this could not ſpeedily be accompliſhed; ſhe had lain too long in her ſituation.

A phyſician was immediately ſent for.

Somers took her hand, to diſcover if there was any pulſe.

It was cold and lifeleſs, nor could he find the leſt vibration; and ſilently concluding ſhe was dead, let fall a tear in honour of humanity.

Freeman

Freeman was drowned in tears: Sir Thomas buſied himſelf in aſſiſting the ſervants: and Sir Charles was frantic; walked about the room in diſorder; ſtruck his hand on his forehead, and curſed the hour that gave him exiſtence.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe or death diſmay, ſtood calm as a chriſtian in the craſh of worlds.

In a ſhort time the phyſician made his appearance; he ordered her inſtantly to be put in a warm bed, and having opened a vein and exhauſted every means within his power, he at length diſcovered ſigns of returning life. In about an hour Auguſta was able to articulate a few words, and requeſted that Ellen would aſſiſt her to dreſs, that ſhe might be re-

moved

moved to another apartment, as ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak with Mr. Somers.

Ellen obeyed, and as ſoon as ſhe was in readineſs delivered her meſſage, which Somers immediately attended to.

Auguſta entreated that he would ſtate the truth reſpecting Theodore, and what his real ſuſpicions were concerning him.

"I am greatly inclined to think," continued ſhe, "that he has committed ſome act of deſperation."

Somers teſtified his ſurpriſe at the laſt remark of Auguſta's, and deſired ſhe would ſtate her reaſons for drawing this concluſion.

Auguſta complied by relating to him all that had paſſed between Theodore and herſelf.

"What time," ſaid Somers, "did you ſee

ſee him attentively ſurveying the river, and then run forwards?"

"As near as I can remember," replied Auguſta, "it was between two and three o'clock."

"I think, I am now able," rejoined Somers," to throw ſome light on this intricate buſineſs.

"But firſt, reſpecting your ſuſpicions, reſt aſſured, they are not realiſed. Theodore is too well educated, has too high a ſenſe of the duty he owes to his God and to his parents, to be guilty of ſo raſh a tranſaction. I know that he has a ſtrong affection for you, and compoſed this ſong merely to ſhew what are ſometimes the conſequences of a denial, but without any intention of practiſing it.

"Theodore has certainly abſconded, and that for the following reaſons.—An

anonymous

anonymous letter was ſent by ſome perſon from Briſtol: the author of which I believe to be Sir Thomas. This letter was addreſſed to Mr. Quibble, the perſon mentioned in the hand-bill, informing him where the advertiſed party was to be found, and that he went by the name of Theodore Somers.

To-day, about the time you mention, a perſon, who profeſſed to be acquainted with Theodore, and declares himſelf employed by his friend, came to my houſe by water from Briſtol. When, therefore, you beheld Theodore looking attentively on the river, you may may depend he diſcovered him, and ſuſpecting his viſit was to compel him to return to his uncle's, he haſtily left the place, and ran leſt the other ſhould have ſeen him. I think," continued Somers, " when you duly weigh

weigh theſe circumſtances, you will conclude with me, that my conjectures are moſt entitled to credit."

"I hope they are," returned Auguſta with a ſigh; "but what does the man want with Theodore?"

"When firſt he came," replied Somers, "I did not find him communicative.—He only anſwered to my queſtions, that he wiſhed to ſee him, and that it was not his intention to remove him.—I then aſked him how he gained the information of his reſidence. 'Perhaps,' ſaid he, looking rather ſuſpicious on me, 'you are the beſt judge.'

"I profeſſed my ſurpriſe," continued Somers, "at his ſuſpicion.—He then produced the anonymous letter, which I immediately concluded was the hand-writing of Sir Thomas, and could not help utter-

ing

ing a few invectives againſt him for his malicious interference. This conduct in me, I am of opinion, leſſened the man's ſuſpicions, as he immediately obſerved that he had concluded I took him under my protection, till I could inform his uncle, thinking I ſhould only do an act of kindneſs to all parties by ſuch a conduct, but that my ſurpriſe, which, he was pleaſed to add, appearing natural, and the explanation I had given, had made him think differently.

"He next informed me that Theodore had a friend who, for particular reaſons, adviſed his departure from his uncle's, and on hearing a letter had been ſent to Mr. Quibble, he would immediately have viſited him, but was prevented by indiſpenſable buſineſs, and therefore he had ſent him as his ſubſtitute, to warn Theodore of his

his danger, and to adviſe with him on what ſteps were beſt to be purſued, till the return of his parents, who were expected by the next fleet.

"I aſked him," continued Somers, "if Theodore knew him. He replied in the affirmative, but that Theodore was not aware how much he was his friend, or that he was in the confidence of the gentleman who adviſed his departure."

Auguſta profeſſed her ſurpriſe, and requeſted of Somers to inform her who Theodore was related to.

"That," replied Somers, "I have not been able to learn, as I could gain no farther intelligence. He informs me he has particular reaſons for not mentioning his family; one ofwhich is, that he was ſtrictly forbid by his employer from ſo doing."

"It

"It appears ſingular," ſaid Auguſta, "that the letter ſent to Mr. Quibble ſhould fall into the hands of Theodore's friend."

"I enquired into the cauſe of this," replied Somers: "the man informs me that Mr. Quibble, who is an attorney, is out of town, and that his buſineſs is tranſacted by his clerk, whom Theodore's friend has bribed for the purpoſe of withholding the information."

Auguſta having ſatisfied herſelf as far as ſhe could reſpecting Theodore, requeſted he would inform her what it was he had ſaid concerning Clariſſa.

Somers replied, "that having waited with anxiety for the return of Theodore, who had not made his appearance at dinner, and the evening beginning to approach,

proach, he conceived that poſſibly he might be gone to the cottage with the hope that he ſhould be able to meet her with Clariſſa; that prompted by this idea, he repaired to Mrs. Bentley's, who profeſſed her ſurpriſe on ſeeing him alone, and eagerly enquired the reaſon of Clariſſa's long abſence.

"Mrs. Bentley's ſurpriſe," continued Somers, "naturally excited my aſtoniſhment.—I aſked her where Clariſſa was gone? She replied, that a man had brought a meſſage, ſignifying that I ſhould be happy to ſee her on ſome particular buſineſs at the lodge, and would not detain her five minutes.

"This information alarmed me, and I replied, no ſuch meſſage was ſent by me.

"Mrs.

"Mrs. Bentley's fears were now ſo much increaſed, that I found it difficult to diſſuade her from going, ill as ſhe was, in ſearch of her.

"I quieted her fears by ſtating that ſhe muſt have miſunderſtood Clariſſa, and that it was you who had requeſted her company inſtead of me, and promiſed immediately to repair here in ſearch of her."

"Good Heaven," exclaimed Auguſta, "what can have become of her! I am quite concerned.—Do haſten back.—Perhaps ſhe has returned; and if ſhe ſhould, or if you receive any letter from Theodore, or other information relative to him, permit me to hope you will take the earlieſt opportunity of communicating it to me."

Somers

Somers promiſed to fulfil her requeſt, and as he was anxious to be gone, he took his leave of her and returned to Sir Charles for the ſame purpoſe.

CHAP. VII.

DURING the abſence of Somers the company had been engaged in a warm diſpute.

Freeman had worked up his paſſions to a degree of phrenſy on account of the ſuſpicions he entertained of Sir Thomas, and called him an infamous ſeducer, and a villain.

Sir Thomas, in return, coolly requeſted he would appoint a time to ſettle it in an honourable way.

Freeman inſtantly left the room.

Sir Thomas, taking advantage of his abſence, aſked Sir Charles if the conduct of Freeman did not evidently beſpeak ſomething

ſomething more than friendſhip for Clariſſa.

Sir Charles, who had been at a loſs to account for the motives which induced him to eſpouſe her cauſe ſo warmly, began to ſuſpect the reality of the caſe; but was prevented from replying, as Freeman at this time entered the room with two ſwords.

"Now," cried Freeman, "take your choice of them, and we will ſee who ſhall triumph, myſelf in the cauſe of virtue, or you in the cauſe of vice; for, by Heaven, I'll prevent you from ſucceeding in your plans, or loſe my life in the attempt; thus let what will be the event my mind will be at reſt."

Sir Thomas, whoſe cool, deliberate courage was equal to his villany, made choice of one of the ſwords; and, after

viewing the point, placed himſelf in a proper attitude: "Come, ſir," cried he, "you ſhall find I will not execute the buſineſs in a ſlovenly manner, but whip through you in an inſtant.—I'll anſwer for it you will ſcarcely feel it."

"We will try that," rejoined Freeman: "you are an excellent bragadocia; you remind me of the Otahetians, defying their enemy with a wry mouth."

Freeman now put himſelf in a poſture of defence.

Sir Charles ſeized his arm, and wreſting the ſword from him, "What is the meaning of this raſhneſs?" cried he; "the active part you take in behalf of the young woman aſtoniſhes me, more particularly as I am inclined to think ſhe has willingly eloped with Theodore.

"You

"You really appear to eſpouſe her cauſe with the warmth of a lover!"

"I have no doubt," rejoined Sir Thomas, "but you have gueſſed the cauſe of his uneaſineſs; and if he were not aſhamed to own it, you would hear him confeſs as much."

This laſt expreſſion was uttered by Sir Thomas for no other purpoſe than thinking it would irritate him to acknowledge it, which could not, he thought, fail of ſerving himſelf eventually.

Freeman immediately fell into the ſnare laid for him.

"Aſhamed!" cried he; "it is my pride to own a lively attachment for her; nor do I know any one more highly deſerving my eſtimation."

Now was the veil torn from the eyes of Sir Charles.

This was an event that all his penetration had not been able to diſcover.

The open avowal of Freeman diſconcerted him, and rendered him unable for a few moments to reply; at length, having recovered his ſpeech, he added, "My daughter, ſir, would not thank you for the compariſon."

"I did not mean," reſumed Freeman, "to detract the merits of my couſin.—She is an amiable character:—equally ſo is Miſs Leſley."

"Edward," rejoined Sir Charles, and aſſuming a ſtern aſpect, "you have treated me in a manner I had no reaſon to expect from you.

"It was your father's wiſh and mine, that an union ſhould take place between you and Auguſta.

"You

"You have viſited me for the purpoſe of carrying this into effect.

"You have impoſed on her by an avowal of attachment, while your heart was otherwiſe engaged, and had the addreſs, likewiſe, to impoſe upon me.

"What Auguſta's feelings will be when ſhe hears of this alteration in your ſentiments, I know not: as to myſelf, I behold you with abhorrence; and you my depend I ſhall take the earlieſt opportunity of acquainting your father of the treatment I have received from you."

"Permit me," ſaid Freeman, "to reply.—Reſpecting it being my father's wiſh, I am firmly of opinion, that he never would have thought of ſuch an union, unleſs it had been propoſed by you; nor do I believe he would wiſh to ſee it ac-

compliſhed unleſs he found it neceſſary to my happineſs.

" With reſpect to my viſiting you for the purpoſe of carrying it into effect, I diſclaim the idea. My viſit here was for the purpoſe of learning Auguſta's ſentiments on the ſubject, and I have had the happineſs to find them ſimilar to my own.

" And as to any deception I have practiſed towards you, there is no perſon culpable but yourſelf.

" Inſtead of leaving us to the free exerciſe of our judgment or inclination, you have at all times inſiſted on the propoſed plan in a manner that would admit of no denial, without gaining your diſpleaſure: I, therefore, thought it moſt adviſable to ſay nothing concerning it, till you ſhould

appear

appear determined on its concluſion. In the mean time, I hoped ſome unforſeen event would occur, or ſome more advantageous offer be made, which would incline you to bear a refuſal from me with more patience than you otherwiſe would do."

"Ungrateful boy!" returned Sir Charles; "it was your happineſs I was conſulting equally with my own: I knew Auguſta to be an amiable character; I likewiſe rated your virtues far higher than they now appear to be, and was unwilling that a perſon worthy, as I thought you, ſhould be paired with one who did not merit you; for this reaſon I came to a determination of beſtowing my daughter on you.

"Another reaſon is, that I thought it

would be imprudent to ſuffer fifty thouſand pounds, which I have laid by, to go out of the family.

" The recollection of this, on my part, ought to make you bluſh for your conduct; but you are callous to every ſentiment of feeling, and loſt to all ſenſe of gratitude."

Freeman thanked him for his generous intentions, and lamented that it was not in his power to accept his proffered goodneſs.

This reply of Freeman's was dictated by genuine ſincerity; but Sir Charles, who beſt knew his own private reaſons for propoſing the match, imagined it to have been ſpoken with a degree of irony, and therefore reſumed, " Your ſneer, ſir, is upon a par with the reſidue of your conduct.

duct. I am not neceſſitated to endure your contempt, in addition to the inſult my family has already received.—

"The ſooner, therefore, you can return to your father, the more you will oblige me."

"I will obey your inſtructions this inſtant," replied Freeman; and immediately ordered his ſervant to pack-up his apparel, and follow him to Briſtol.

At this juncture Somers entered, and finding there had been an altercation between Freeman and Sir Charles, and that the former was preparing to quit the houſe, he uſed his utmoſt endeavours to effect a reconcilation, but this could not be accompliſhed.

Somers being ignorant of the cauſe of quarrel between them, and hoping ſtill to prevail on Freeman to apologiſe to his

uncle, inſiſted on his making Cliffdown-lodge his home for a few days.

Freeman accepted the invitation.

Somers then turned to Sir Charles; "I preſume, ſir," ſaid he, "you will not be offended, if I bring Mr. Freeman here with me in the morning, to breakfaſt."

"If," replied Sir Charles, "he ſhould by that time think proper to alter his conduct, I ſhall be glad to ſee him; but otherwiſe, I inſiſt upon it, that he never enters the doors again."

Freeman entreated that he might be allowed to take his leave of Auguſta, but Sir Charles refuſed him that gratification; he then turned to Sir Thomas, and requeſted he would accompany him to the lodge, where they might argue their affair over coolly and diſpaſſionately.

Here, again, Sir Charles thwarted him, by

delaring he would not truſt Sir Thomas with ſuch a fool and a madman.

The ſervant now appeared with the portmanteau; and Freeman, after bowing reſpectfully to his uncle, told Sir Thomas he ſhould find a time to thank him for his ſervices.

Sir Charles followed Somers to the door, and aſſured him he ſhould at all times be proud of the honour of his company.

Somers thanked him for the invitation, and retired.

Sir Thomas now completely enjoyed his triumph; his laſt ſuggeſtion concerning Freeman being realiſed, Sir Charles looked upon him as a young man who poſſeſſed a profound ſhare of penetration, and naturally concluded that what he had

had advanced concerning Theodore and Clariſſa was equally entitled to credit.

Having grounded himſelf in this belief, he conſidered all that had been ſaid to blacken Sir Thomas as the mere effects of jealouſy in Edward, and want of penetration on the part of Somers; he, therefore, preſſed him to ſtay a few weeks at his houſe.

Sir Thomas alleged that he ſhould be obliged to viſit London, for the purpoſe of completing a purchaſe which he had in contemplation, with the money Sir Charles had paid him for the eſtate; adding, "You know, ſir, ſo large a ſum ought not to remain idle."

In which remark Sir Charles concurred; but, at the ſame time, obſerved, that two or three days would make no material

rial difference, as he wiſhed for his company, and poſſibly it might be agreeable to his daughter, whoſe ſpirits would be relieved by ſociety.

Sir Thomas could not now refuſe with any degree of propriety. He replied it was his intention to remain a few days in the country, in order to expoſe the ill-founded and malicious ſuſpicions that had been raiſed againſt him concerning Miſs Leſley.

In which ſituation I ſhall leave him, while I return to Somers and Freeman.

After quitting Sir Charles, Somers, accompanied by Freeman, haſtened to the lodge, anxiouſly hoping he ſhould hear ſome intelligence of Theodore, but was diſappointed.

He requeſted the meſſenger, who was ſtill in waiting, to make his houſe his home

home for a few days, as probably ſome news might arrive of him.

The man agreed to accept his invitation for the night, but pleaded a neceſſity of leaving him on the following day.

Somers ordered accommodation to be got in readineſs for his gueſts, and taking Freeman with him, purſued his way towards Mrs. Bentley's cottage.

During their walk Freeman acquainted him with his ſentiments in behalf of Clariſſa, and aſſured Somers that it was his intention to have applied to his father for his conſent, which would have forwarded his wiſhes, as Clariſſa refuſed to accept him, or attend to his propoſal, till he had obtained his approbation.

Somers, who had hitherto been at a loſs to account for the vehemence with which he defended Clariſſa and eſpouſed her

her cauſe, now condoled with him, and made uſe of a variety of improbable conjectures tending to her welfare, for the purpoſe of ſetting his mind at reſt by alleviating his fears.

When they arrived at the cottage, they found Mrs. Bentley almoſt incapable of uttering a ſentence.

Freeman eagerly enquired if ſhe had heard of Clariſſa.

The old lady anſwered in the negative.

Her long illneſs had nearly reduced her to the verge of the grave, and this laſt blow ſeemed as if it would haſten the awful period.

Somers requeſted ſhe would endeavour to compoſe her mind, and ſupport herſelf with fortitude. He then requeſted Freeman would

would wait on the ferryman, and entreat his wife inſtantly to attend her.

During the abſence of Freeman, Mrs. Bentley pointed to a drawer, and deſired Somers to give it her.

She then delivered to him her will, with the deed which conveyed to her the title to her cottage and garden.

"If you find the dear child," ſaid ſhe, "give her my choiceſt bleſſing with theſe papers;" then burſting into tears, ſhe prayed to Heaven to protect her.

Somers endeavoured to adminiſter comfort to her afflicted mind, by aſſuring her the providence of God was equally able to ſupport her in whatever danger ſhe might be neceſſitated to encounter.

He likewiſe pointed out the impropriety there would be in her remaining alone at

at the cottage, and entreated that ſhe would ſubmit to be removed to his houſe.

She thanked him for his offer, but refuſed it.

"My race is run," ſaid ſhe, "and ſoon will my ſorrows be at reſt.—This laſt ſhock muſt terminate my exiſtence."

Freeman entered with the woman, who promiſed not to leave her.

Somers having made uſe of every argument that friendſhip or religion could dictate to ſoften her grief and revive her hope, took leave of her for the night, promiſing to viſit her early on the enſuing morning.

"Ah, my God!" exclaimed Somers, as he left the threſhold, "what have thoſe to anſwer for, who, to ſatisfy a momentary enjoyment, plunge an innocent character

racter into diſgrace, and cut the thread of life of this poor but affectionate woman!"

Freeman, much as he was afflicted by the preceding ſcene, was not capable of moralizing on it.

Somers had touched a chord that thrilled through his ſoul, and ſhook his frame with horror—he had hinted at the ruin of Clariſſa.

Inſtead, therefore, of replying in the ſame ſtrain, he vowed vengeance againſt Sir Thomas, unleſs he would diſcloſe where ſhe was.

"It is not," rejoined Somers, "by the uſe of coercive means that you will gain any intelligence of Clariſſa.

"Sir Thomas is not afraid to meet your ſword; and I am confident he would expire ſooner than be compelled to confeſs.

"Neither

"Neither will entreaty on your part avail, as he is dead to every ſentiment of virtue; and your eagerneſs to obtain her would only enhance the value of his prey.

"Sir Thomas, likewiſe, poſſeſſes an uncommon ſhare of art, yet I ſhould preſume at this period he will be too intent on following his own inclinations, to place that proper guard on his actions that he otherwiſe would do.

"The moſt adviſable ſtep you can purſue, is to ſet a ſpy upon his conduct."

Freeman approved of the advice, and as ſoon as he reached the houſe, he deſired his ſervant to attend him.

He knew that Sir Thomas had not been ſufficiently in the company of this man to recollect his features; he therefore furniſhed him with a ſuit of his own clothes,

and

and a ſupply of money, deſiring him to gain information when Sir Thomas ſhould leave his uncle's houſe, and to follow him. If he purſued a journey, then to take a poſt-chaiſe or ſaddle-horſe, as might beſt ſuit his convenience, or anſwer the end propoſed.

That ſhould he be able to gain a ſight of, or intelligence concerning Clariſſa, to ſend word to Cliffdown-lodge where ſhe was ſituated.

The man having received his inſtructions departed.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

FREEMAN ſpent a ſleepleſs night; the anxiety of his ſpirits not permitting him to enjoy repoſe.

He formed a thouſand conjectures concerning what had become of Clariſſa; and at length recollecting Mrs. Gripes, blamed himſelf for not having ſearched her houſe.

He ſuſpected, that ſhe muſt have been the perſon who informed Sir Thomas of Clariſſa in the firſt inſtance, and dreaded leſt ſhe ſhould again be under her roof.

"Perhaps," cried he, "the villain is at this time endeavouring, aſſiſted by that miſcreant woman, to ſeduce her."

Mad

Mad with the idea, he roſe in a ſtate of diſtraction at the dawn of day, and quitting the houſe reſolved to viſit Mrs. Gripe.

For this purpoſe he walked to Briſtol, and waited in the ſtreet till he obſerved a ſervant opening the ſhutters.

Having obtained admittance, he locked the ſtreet-door, put the key in his pocket, and proceeded to ſearch the apartments.

The lady abbeſs was alarmed on receiving intelligence of his breaking the doors.

She threw a morning-gown on her ſhoulders, and made her appearance. She ſolemnly proteſted her innocence, and alleged that ſhe had neither heard of, or ſeen Sir Thomas, for ſome weeks paſt.

That he was the moſt unlikely perſon

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in the world to be guilty of ſuch a practice, as he, at that time, had Sophia Bridport in keeping, to whom he was extremely partial.

Freeman, not placing a firm reliance on her aſſeverations, inſiſted ſtill on ſearching.

Mrs. Gripe repreſented the impropriety of ſuch a ſtep, as there were ſeveral gentlemen in the houſe. The more ſhe profeſſed a reluctance, the more was he determined to examine the apartments, and therefore, in defiance of her entreaties, he proceeded in his ſearch.

Where he could not gain admittance, he ſet his foot againſt the doors and burſt them open.

This created a general uproar in the houſe, and he was preſently ſurrounded by priggiſh ſhopmen, honeſt tars, limbs

of the law, ſmug parſons, officers in the army, and methodiſt preachers.

The ſhopman firſt addreſſed him, by enquiring the cauſe of this intruſion.

Freeman explained.

The ſhopman conceived he acted highly improper, in endeavouring to deprive the city of its trade. He profeſſed himſelf a well-wiſher to trade in general; and if the young lady had an inclination to ſet up on her own bottom, he conceived it iniquitous to prevent her;—declared there was a dearth of the commodity in the city, and therefore it did become the inhabitants to import, or manufacture, a ſufficient quantity of the article for their own uſe.

The honeſt tar was of a different opinion.

He conceived there always would be a ſupply,

ſupply, without promoting the ſmuggling trade; and if the gentleman had a freight which he had reſerved for his own uſe, he did not ſee why it ſhould be purloined from him, to be conſumed by every puppy; and applied to the parſon for the truth of his declaration.

"Why, really," replied the ſmug parſon, "taking it in a moral point of view, it is very wrong.—We are commanded not to covet our neighbour's goods, nor any thing that is his.

"Now, as this gentleman claims her as his own, it is highly immoral, and ſtrictly againſt both the laws of God and man, to act upon ſuch a principle."

"Hold your tongue about the law," cried the attorney; "what ſhould a parſon know about law?

"He may have loſt the young lady,

or he may not.—But of this I am certain, that he broke open my door, nor can I find *my* girl. Therefore I'll ſerve him with a clauſum fregit, for the aſſault and battery; and I'll be hanged if I do not bring an action of trover, to recover her from him that has found her, and after that, maintain my action for the mean profits during the time ſhe was in his poſſeſſion; and when I catch her, it ſhall go hard with me if I do not ſerve her with a fieri facias or a certiorari."

"Arra," cried the officer, who was an Iriſhman, "don't be after bodering us with your ſuper ſnajums, clauſum fregets, fiery faces, or ſiſſararoes.

"The gentleman, you hear, has loſt his lady, and ſuſpects his friend has ran away with her.

"Take my advice, ſir," ſaid he, addreſſ-

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ing himſelf to Freeman, "call him out, and, damn me, pink him; whip him through the lungs, and get the ſecret from him dead or alive."

"Don't ſwear, friend," ſaid the methodiſt preacher; "it ſhocks my ears to hear your profaneneſs;—the Lord will certainly viſit you for it;—you forget the commandment that forbids you to ſwear."

"And by Jaſus," cried the officer, "you forget the commandment that ſays, 'Thou ſhalt not be after committing adultery.'"

"I abhor the crime," ſaid the methodiſt preacher; "the girl, I believe, is not another man's wife; and therefore my crime is only ſimple fornication, which I truſt, through mercy, will be overlooked.

"God knoweth my ſpirit wiſheth to

ſerve him, but my fleſh is weak.—The body periſheth after my deceaſe, but the ſoul liveth for ever.—Now it is not my ſoul that erreth, but my body: as therefore my ſoul is pure, I have nothing to fear; and that it is pure I am able to know, for I have received full conviction that I am one of the elect; having the indwellings of the ſpirit, it is a certain ſign the Lord hath forgiven the ſins of the fleſh, and that I never can finally fall."

Perhaps my reader will be greatly ſurpriſed, that I ſhould expoſe ſo ſanctified a perſon as a methodiſt preacher in ſuch a place as I have been deſcribing; but I have ſtrong reaſons to doubt, whether he was not, in reality, the worſt character amongſt them.

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In vindication, therefore, of myſelf, permit me to digreſs, while I relate the riſe and progreſs of a methodiſt preacher.

Figure to yourſelf a ſhoemaker, mounted in a back garrat, with a ſcolding wife, and ſeveral ſqualling children.

He cannot endure home after the hours of labour, on account of the ſerenading of his Xantippe.

His earnings too ſmall to admit of drunkenneſs, or even to take a ſolitary pint in a public-houſe, and much leſs to viſit a theatre or other place of amuſement.

To walk the ſtreets is but ſorry employment: he, therefore, to beguile an hour, ſtrolls into a methodiſt meeting.

There he hears an enthuſiaſtic ranter, haranguing an illiterate audience; and with a ſinging, whining tone of voice, cal-

culated to inſpire the ſame kind of enthuſiaſm, he draws the attention of his itinerant hearers; and afterwards ſums up the whole with a hymn, ſet to a drawling, ſtupifying tune, in which every fervent bigot joins with ſuch devotion, that the poor ſhoe-maker cannot help catching a ſpark of the fire which actuates the reſidue.

He now aſſociates with none but methodiſts; enſlaves himſelf by talking and thinking of the doctrine profeſſed by them.

He goes again and again, till he, by conſtant repetition, feels the ſame enthuſiaſm as themſelves.

This, he avows, is the pure ſpirit of God that has taken poſſeſſion of him; declares himſelf a choſen veſſel, predeſtinated from the firſt, and one of God's elect.

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He tortures texts of ſcripture to prove that God has predeſtinated ſome to be damned, and ſome to be ſaved;—amongſt the latter he is ſure to reckon himſelf.

Proud of his new ſyſtem, and declaring he has received a call from the Moſt High to preach his word, he plants himſelf upon ſome drift-hill, thrown up beſide a public road, and preaches to the paſſers by.—Some ſtop through motives of curioſity, and, perhaps, ſome ſtragglers of his own faith neglect their work, while they liſten to him.

He harangues with ardour till he ſweats in the cauſe, and foams at the mouth; then, concluding with one of his hymns, as uſual, informs his hearers he ſhall again hold forth on ſuch a day.

Thus he very ſoon forms a ſmall

congregation; and, perhaps, prevails on a farmer to lend him his barn.

Here he collects money, and by degrees gets his hearers to be bound for him for more.

A chapel is then built, where, by collections and ſeats, he pays off the expence, and it becomes his own.

One of his principal arguments againſt the eſtabliſhed miniſters of the church is, "that they felt not as he did; were not moved to preach by the holy ſpirit, but by the hope of a rich living."—Yet will you ſee this cormorant lay out his chapel in galleries and pews, ſo as not to leave ſtanding room for a dozen individuals; thus making every perſon pay who hears him. And if you remonſtrate with him, he replies from ſcripture,

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"The labourer is worthy of his hire;" or "See that ye forſake not the levite, &c." The old text that he always foiſted againſt the church miniſters, which ſays, "Take ye neither purſe nor ſcrip with you, &c." is totally forgotten by him.

If he collected nothing from his hearers but what was neceſſary for the ſupport of his meeting, and attended to his original trade, he would ſhew that his ends were not mercenary, and that his preaching was dictated from conſcientious motives; but he now leaves off mending ſoles of ſhoes, and attends only to converting ſouls of chriſtians, that his chapel may be well filled; and what with his pews, galleries, and collections, he is able to keep his carriage!

Thriving profeſſion!!

Perhaps, for the purpoſe of keeping

his flock together, or increaſing it by others, he turns baptiſt, and brings his audience to the ſame perſuaſion.

Then oppoſite his pulpit is ſunk a ſeſpool, where tallow-chandlers and pretty milliners, butchers and ladies' maids, taylors and baſket-women, are ſouſed one after the other in the face of the congregation, that their ſouls may thereby find a ſafe paſſport to heaven.

But to what will not bigotry ſubject the enthuſiaſtic and miſguided ?

Reader, if ever you had entered what they call their Holy of Holies, where the ſelect out of the elected are gathered together, and obſerved them at their prayer meetings, you would then be able to witneſs their enthuſiaſm.

I have ſeen a journeyman taylor on his knees praying with the utmoſt devotion ;

—his

—his features diſtorted, his body in perpetual motion, his hands quivering as if ſhook by the palſy, and large drops of perſpiration ſtanding on his forehead; and when aſked the reaſon, after his fit was over, replied, "he was full of the ſpirit."

If they loſe this ſenſation for ſome hours, as will frequently be the caſe, they declare themſelves in the valley of diſpair, and that God whips them for their paſt offences; but if they are of a conſtitution to endure the perpetual ardour, and are able to provoke it, then they ſay, "God dandles them on his knee as he would a young child."

Reader, do not bluſh that men ſhould thus deſcend into ſuch wild extravagances, but conſider they have taken leave of their ſenſes, and let it plead their apology.

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This enthuſiaſtic fire aſſures them they are the elect, and never can finally fall. Now, although there are many whom reaſon and common ſenſe oblige to recant from their notions, yet does it not convince the reſidue: they ſay he was a deceiver; that the ſpirit never viſited him; and ſelect a text, "He went out from us, becauſe he was not of us," and the poor enlightened ſoul is termed a backſlider, is deſpiſed by ſome, and pitied by others.

By entering their Holy of Holies, attending their prayer meetings, ſelf-examinations, or love-feaſts, you will become convinced that their enthuſiaſtic notions compel them to any thing.

One text I cannot help remarking, which they bring in defence of their faith,

faith, " Narrow is the way, and few there be that find it ;" thereby concluding, that the methodiſts, who are but few when compared to the eſtabliſhed church, and far leſs when compared with Mahometans, Jews, &c. &c. are the identical few that are the elect, and are to be ſaved ; forgetting that the Arians, Socinians, Moravians, Unitarians, &c. &c. who the methodiſtsdeclare will be finally damned, are infinitely leſs in number than themſelves, and thereby, according to their own reckoning, themſelves ſtand a worſe chance than do either of theſe ſects.

If they commit an error by getting their maid with child, or ſomething equally immoral, they have a wonderful method of bringing themſelves off, by declaring, in a canting, whining manner,

ner, " The Lord let them go, to ſhew them what they were."

It is not, therefore, ſurpriſing that ſo godly a ſet of men ſhould err, ſeeing that to the Author of all goodneſs they attribute their vices.

Is it therefore ſtrange, that a character of this deſcription ſhould be found in a houſe of ill fame?

It is, however, no more ſtrange than true, and when diſcovered, it will go hard with them if they do not find a text from ſcripture to paliate their vices; and therefore, when the methodiſt preacher obſerved the eyes of every one fixed upon him, he called out, " Let him without ſin caſt the firſt ſtone! Chriſt did not come to call the righteous but ſinners to repentance."

Freeman

Freeman turned from this motley aſſemblage of devotees, and after carefully inveſtigating every apartment, and meeting with no ſucceſs, he relinquiſhed the ſearch; then turning to Mrs. Gripe, he gave her ſome money to repair the damage her locks and bolts had ſuſtained.

Freeman called to his recollection the diſtreſs Mr. Bridport had undergone, through the loſs of his daughter; and Mrs. Gripe having mentioned that Sir Thomas had her ſtill in keeping, he endeavoured to prevail on her to mention the place where ſhe lived.

Mrs. Gripe heſitated for ſome time; but at length, upon Freeman's repeated entreaty, ſhe informed him that ſhe reſided at a ſmall houſe near the London road beyond Reading, and paſſed by the name

name of Thompſon, adding at the ſame time, " If Sir Thomas thinks he can manage his concerns better without my aſſiſtance than with it, let him take the conſequences."

Freeman did not underſtand the meaning of her expreſſion, being too much agitated for the fate of Clariſſa to inveſtigate it, but concluded Sir Thomas had given her ſome offence. He now left her and returned to Somers, whom he found ſitting in his parlour in ſerious contemplation.

Somers had riſen early, and purſued his way to Mrs. Bentley's cottage; the door was opened by the woman he had left to attend her.

She requeſted he would immediately go up ſtairs, as the old lady was conſiderably altered for the worſe.

Somers found her in the agonies of death.

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She graſped his hand in one of hers, while ſhe laid her other hand upon her breaſt, and faintly articulated "Oh! my heart!" Shortly after ſhe heaved a deep ſigh, and expired.

Somers ſat a few minutes beſide her bed, not knowing ſhe was lifeleſs, till perceiving ſtrong marks of diſſolution on her countenance, he deſired the woman to bring him a glaſs, and applying it to her lips, found no appearance of breath upon it; and taking up her hand he endeavoured to diſcover if there were any pulſe, but all vibration had ceaſed.

He viewed this awful ſcene with calm ſerenity, while his ſoul was wrapt up in contemplation of his Creator. "God," ſaid he, "is good in all his works: how infinite muſt her bliſs be, when taken from

from this ſcene of ſorrow, and tranſlated to endleſs happineſs!"

The woman who attended heard the words that fell from the lips of Somers, and rejoined, "God is good for certain; but how much better would it have been if Miſs Clariſſa had not left her? ſhe would then have had no occaſion for ſorrow."

"You appear," ſaid Somers, "to arraign the wiſdom of Providence, and I fear there are in the world too many like you. I will remind you of two lines I have ſomewhere heard, and which perfectly agree with my opinion:

'Even croſſes from his Sovereign hand
Are bleſſings in diſguiſe.'

"Clariſſa has undoubtedly been taken from

from this place by improper means, yet it may ſo happen that it ſhall be the moſt fortunate occurrence of her life; but whether it is or not, of this you muſt be ſatisfied, her Creator is as able to protect her wherever ſhe may be, as he was when ſhe remained under this humble roof.

"Never, therefore, murmer at his diſpenſations. It ſhocks my ears when I hear a worm of earth arraign the wiſdom of the Deity."

Somers deſired her to remain with the corpſe, and he would give orders for the funeral.

Having locked up her drawers, he returned in contemplative mood to his houſe.

He next examined her will, to diſcover if ſhe had pointed out any particular place for her interment; but ſhe had been

been ſilent on that head; he therefore determined on burying her in the pariſh where ſhe had reſided.

Mrs. Bentley had bequeathed to Clariſſa the cottage and its contents, as likewiſe the ſmall ſum of money ſhe had by her, which ſum he was able to aſcertain without ſearching her drawers, as ſhe had mentioned it in a paper annexed to her will.

She had on the day preceding her deceaſe received her widows' penſion, which was inſerted; but the fifty pounds that Freeman had incloſed as if ſent by Morris was not put down, he therefore concluded Clariſſa had it in her poſſeſſion.

While he was contemplating on this circumſtance, Freeman entered.

Somers informed him of the death of Mrs. Bently, and produced the will.

Freeman was happy to find Clariſſa had

had the fifty pounds in her poſſeſſion, as in caſe of neceſſity it might befriend her.

He then related his adventure of the morning, and likewiſe mentioned the place where Sophia Bridport was to be found, and under what name ſhe paſſed.

This Somers carefully put down, for the purpoſe of communicating it to her father.

Freeman now declared his intention of viſiting London, as he wiſhed to call on a friend who was intimate with Sir Thomas, and who he concluded would give him every information concerning Clariſſa, provided Sir Thomas ſhould write and inform him, or if he ſhould have ordered her to be conveyed to his houſe in town.

Freeman's ſervant now made his appearance,

pearance, and informed him that Sir Thomas had ſlept at Sir Charles's.

Freeman deſired him if he ſhould gain any intelligence of Clariſſa to write to him in London, and likewiſe to Mr. Somers at the ſame time.

Somers, who knew the ſtate of Freeman's mind, did not endeavour to diſſuade him from proſecuting his plan; therefore, after taking ſome refreſhment, Freeman departed.

The meſſenger likewiſe who came for Theodore took his leave, after adviſing Somers, if he ſhould return, to detain him at his houſe, aſſuring him that he might rely upon it that no information ſent to Mr. Quibble's would be able to affect him.

Somers being now once more left to himſelf, recalled to his mind the events

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of the paſt week. Events which, although diſtreſſing in their nature, had alleviated his mind, by keeping it employed for the welfare of others, or feeling for other's ſorrows, which in part deprived him of the recollection of his own.

Yet having now no one with him, he conſidered it a favourable opportunity to viſit the temple, and devote an hour to himſelf.

But, as if fate had reſolved he ſhould have no leiſure for unavailing melancholy, as he left his door he was accoſted by Mr. Bridport, who came in conſequence of the invitation he received, and to pour forth the tribute of gratitude.

Before I introduce him, it will be neceſſary to give ſome account of his family, and the tranſaction of Sir Thomas which I have before hinted at.

CHAP. IX.

MR. BRIDPORT was the ſon of a clergyman, who had brought him up to the church, in expectation that he would ſucceed to the living then enjoyed by him.

Bridport had ſcarcely attained the age of twenty-one before he became enamoured with the daughter of a captain in the army, who had no other exiſtence than his pay.

Bridport's father was too indulgent a parent to oppoſe the inclination of his ſon, and therefore conſented to their union.

This event was ſucceeded by the death of

of the lady's father, who had been for ſome time in an ill ſtate of health.

Bridport ſold his effects at his deceaſe, which put him in poſſeſſion of about five hundred pounds.

The intereſt of this ſum was too trifling to exiſt upon; he, therefore, turned his attention to renting ſome land, the profits of which he flattered himſelf would make up the deficiency, till the deceaſe of his father, at which time he expected to be promoted to the living then held by him.

It was not long before an eligible farm offered itſelf upon the eſtate belonging to the father of Sir Thomas Blandford.

This farm he engaged; beautified the houſe, and took up his reſidence in it.

He ſoon found his circumſtances getting worſe inſtead of better.

He could not, as a clergyman, ſtoop to the menial offices a farmer muſt neceſſarily be engaged in; as ſuch, he was obliged to entruſt the chief management of it to others who daily defrauded him.

After he had been ſettled in this farm about two years, he had the misfortune to loſe his father, and immediately wrote to the gentleman in whoſe gift the living was, requeſting to be promoted to it; but received in reply, that it had been long promiſed to a clergyman of his acquaintance.

He was not prepared to meet with ſuch a diſappointment.

In this emergency, he began ſeriouſly to conſider what was beſt to be done.

His father had bequeathed him a thouſand pounds.

This, together with the leaſe of his farm,

farm, and ſome ſtock, was all that he could reckon himſelf worth. The former ſum of five hundred pounds having been expended on his houſe, and through improper management.

After maturely deliberating, he reſolved to purſue his farming ſcheme, and to redouble his attention.

His wife now brought him a daughter, but did not ſurvive its birth.

This was a ſevere blow to him.

He loved her with ſincerity, and out of reſpect to her memory, declared he never would again enter into the marriage ſtate, but attend to the education of his child, whom he named Sophia.

Yet in this he was diſappointed, for Lady Blandford, the preſent Sir Thomas's mother, having ſeen it, became ſo partial to the infant, that ſhe made a

propoſal to Bridport, offering to take the child under her protection.

This offer, ſo material to his child's welfare and future proſpects in life, he could not think of rejecting, and therefore parted from her when ſhe was little more than two years of age.

Year after year Bridport found himſelf getting backwards.

His thouſand pounds was reduced to the laſt hundred; and this he conſidered the more ſurpriſing, as he held his farm at the ſame rent it had been let for thirty years before; at which rent the laſt tenant had lived in reſpectability, brought up a large family, and been enabled to lay by money.

Having mentioned this to a friend of his, he was anſwered, that he ſhould do as the laſt farmer had done, clap his ſhoulder

ſhoulder to the wheel, and he would ſpeedily diſcover the difference.

This plan he determined to adopt, and began by diſcharging the bailiff, and ſome extra hands, whom he thought he could do without.

He ſoon diſcovered theſe men had been exiſting on his profits, by groſsly impoſing on him.

He conſtantly attended his men, and found, aſſiſted by the eye of a maſter, that three men would get through as much work as ſix would formerly.

His corn yielded more per acre, and ſold for more in the market. The reaſon was obvious;—he attended it himſelf, and therefore received its full value.

He was now enabled to live without further aſſiſtance, which heretofore had not been the caſe.

Sophia, as ſhe grew up, was univerſally admired.

Lady Blandford was ſo extravagantly partial to her, as never to be happy out of her ſight.

By the time ſhe had reached her fifteenth year, young Blandford returned from the univerſity.

He could not behold Sophia, in whom was blended a variety of pleaſing accompliſhments, without feeling the force of them.

Lady Blandford obſerved the conſtant attention paid to Sophia by her ſon.

Her partiality for him led her to conclude it was merely as a compliment meant to herſelf, and the effects of a polite and liberal education.

She had never once conceived he had formed an attachment for her; if ſhe had,

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her pride would have ſuggeſted to her ſome means of keeping them apart.

Blandford had, therefore, the pleaſure of her ſociety whenever he deſired it; and there is little doubt, had ſhe been a perſon of family and fortune, but that he would have ſolicited her hand.

His father, Sir Thomas Blandford, dying ſhortly after, he became poſſeſſed of the title and a large eſtate unincumbered.

Lady Blandford being adviſed, for the relief of her ſpirits, to viſit London, ſhe prevailed upon her ſon to accompany her, intending likewiſe to take Sophia with her.

Bridport, whoſe only proſpect of happineſs was centered in his child, waited on Lady Blandford, and earneſtly intreated her to permit his daughter to reſide with him

during her ſtay in London, alleging that he ſhould feel himſelf extremely uneaſy at her being removed to ſo great a diſtance.

Lady Blandford, taking into conſideration the feelings of a parent, conſented to his requeſt, although with evident reluctance.

Sophia, therefore, for the firſt time ſince ſhe was two years old, took up her reſidence at her father's.

Sir Thomas ſhortly after his arrival in London was ſurrounded by young men of faſhion and fortune, who led him into various exceſſes.

By them he was taught to eſteem fortune only as it afforded the means of adding to his pleaſures; and having laid it down as a maxim, that a man had an undoubted right to enjoy himſelf in any courſe, however vicious, provided

his

his eſtate was adequate, it quickly ruined the principles of virtue his father had been at ſo much pains to inculcate.

During the winter, Lady Blandford, who had never been able to recover her ſpirits ſince the death of her huſband, paid the debt of nature.

This awful event, for a ſhort time, checked Sir Thomas in his career of vice; but time and company ſoon obliterated the recollection of it.

He now began to think on what means he ſhould exerciſe, to gain Sophia Bridport.

He had ſhared in the careſſes of many different women, but no one had been able to ſhare his heart;—that remained with Sophia.

Whenever he had harboured an idea

of obtaining her by improper means, the recollection of the affection his mother retained for her always checked him, and prevented his putting ſuch a plan in practice, but her death having quieted his fears on that head, he had now, on his ſide, no obſtacle to oppoſe.

Frequently, as he ſat ruminating on his plans, his affection for her prompted him to turn his thoughts on matrimony.

She was deſcended from a clergyman on one ſide, and a military officer on the other; ſhe had received a brilliant education, and was, in all other reſpects, truly amiable; but ſtill ſhe was a farmer's daughter. The idea of what the world would think of ſuch a degrading match rendered it impoſſible for him to put it in practice.

He

He knew, from a thouſand occurrences, that Sophia had an unalterable attachment for him.

This he concluded might aſſiſt him in his deſign of taking her into keeping. But how he was to undermine thoſe principles of virtue which his mother had inſtilled, he knew not.

She had ever conducted herſelf towards him with the greateſt propriety. Her modeſty of carriage was a trait diſtinguiſhable in her above all others, and made him dread the neceſſity there appeared to be of making her an improper propoſal, leſt it ſhould prompt her never again to truſt herſelf in his company.

Upon weighing all theſe circumſtances, he determined to leave London and viſit her, truſting that time and opportunity would

would afford him some unguarded moment to forward his designs.

One other circumstance occurred to his mind, which, if removed, would materially assist in promoting his designs;—this was, the independence of Bridport.

He lived within the compass of his earnings, and owed no one any thing.

Sir Thomas knew that Bridport had a strong desire to speculate in the purchase of farming stock, but had hitherto been unable for want of the means.

These means he determined to assist him with, as it would then afford him an opportunity of acting his own will respecting Sophia, without dreading the resentment of her father, who would be awed into silence, lest Sir Thomas should put his demand in force against him.

When,

When, therefore, he arrived at his ſeat, he invited Bridport, talked freely with him about his concerns, and offered him the uſe of his purſe whenever occaſion ſhould require.

Bridport teſtified his gratitude for this apparently generous offer, and promiſed, in return, to give him every ſecurity within his power for any ſum he might advance.

It was not long before Bridport felt an inclination to put his friendſhip to the teſt.

A perſon had lately died who rented the farm adjoining to his, the leaſe of which, and ſtock on the premiſes, were advertiſed to be ſold.

Bridport wiſhed to add this farm to his own; but as it would require nearly a thouſand pounds to complete the purchaſe, a ſum which he was not in poſſeſ-

ſion

ſion of, he could not attain it without the proffered aſſiſtance of Sir Thomas.

He therefore waited on him, and diſtantly hinted at the buſineſs in queſtion.

"Speak out, man," cried Sir Thomas; "you want the money to purchaſe it; believe me it is but a trifle between friends: I will anſwer your draft to any amount."

Bridport knew not how ſufficiently to expreſs his gratitude.

"Say no more about it," replied Sir Thomas; "all I ſhall require of you in return is a warrant of attorney for the amount, and a depoſit of your leaſes by way of collateral ſecurity, that in caſe of death I may, if I think proper, recover the money."

Bridport made not the leaſt heſitation.

The leaſe and ſtock were purchaſed for nine

nine hundred pounds, which Sir Thomas advanced; the deed was then executed, and the leaſe delivered with it.

Now did Sir Thomas conclude would be the moſt favourable opportunity for putting his deſigns in execution.

He had frequently ſince his return viſited Sophia, renewed his profeſſions of inviolable attachment, and obtained from her an aſſurance that her heart had long been in his poſſeſſion, and would unalterably continue the ſame.

She had, notwithſtanding, noticed during the profeſſions of Sir Thomas that he never mentioned marriage, and therefore took an opportunity when they were alone to ſpeak on the diſparity of their fortune; and fearing he meant to act otherwiſe than honourably with her, ſhe likewiſe dwelt on the impropriety ſhe

was

was guilty of, in attending to his addreſſes, before he had conſulted her father upon it.

Sir Thomas ſaw the drift of this converſation; he aſſured her in return that he ſhould the firſt convenient opportunity ſend for, and acquaint Mr. Bridport of his intentions, which were to make her honourably his, and pledged his life for the truth of his aſſertion.

Sir Thomas did not mind uttering a falſhood to a fine woman, but could not bear to be detected in it; and therefore generally made uſe of ſuch expreſſions as would admit of an explanation either way. Thus when he was ſome time afterwards reminded by her of his promiſe, "True," replied he, "I did ſay as much; but could you imagine I meant marriage? No: far from it. It was not my intention

tion to ſhackle either you or myſelf in the trammels of matrimony.

" You would then have had a claim upon me and my fortune, and of courſe had no occaſion to truſt to my honour.

" There needs no legal bond in an honourable connection, as it exiſts on the mere faith of each party, or otherwiſe it would loſe its name."

Sophia having received the before-mentioned declaration, acquainted her father with it; who after teſtifying his ſurpriſe, ſignified his intention of ſpeaking with Sir Thomas. To this ſhe objected, thinking it would be more adviſable to wait till the propoſal came from the other quarter; but Bridport perſiſting in his determination, ſhe felt a neceſſity of acquainting Sir Thomas with what had paſſed between herſelf and her father.

Sir

Sir Thomas, on the receipt of this intelligence, ſaw there was no time to be loſt; he therefore viſited her when he knew her father was abſent from home, and requeſted her to walk with him.

This ſhe conſented to: he then informed her that he was making ſome improvements in his houſe, and that he ſhould be highly flatterred if ſhe would give her opinion of it; adding, that as they ſhould ſhortly be upon a more tender footing, and as it would be her ſummer reſidence, ſhe ought to be conſulted on it.

Sophia objected to viſiting the houſe unleſs accompanied by her father, or ſome female friend.

Sir Thomas reproached her with a want of confidence, and argued ſtrongly to

to prove that it plainly teſtified a want of affection.

This was far from being the caſe with Sophia, nor could ſhe endure that he ſhould harbour ſo unjuſt an idea.

To obliterate it therefore from his mind, ſhe at length, although with evident reluctance, conſented.

CHAP. X.

THEY ſhortly reached the houſe; he then ſhewed her into various apartments, ſome of which he was having new furniſhed.

This he had the addreſs to perſuade her was for her future accommodation; alleging, that he could not think of introducing her as his partner to the houſe furniſhed in its former antique ſtyle.

During her walk to the various apartments ſhe had hitherto ſeen, Sir Thomas had conducted himſelf with the utmoſt decorum.

Nor could ſhe avoid bluſhing for her unjuſt ſuſpicions, when he ſhewed her the

the various bed-rooms, and did not requeſt her to enter them; but contented himſelf with her remaining at the door of each room, while he pointed out the improvements.

This conduct in him aſſured her that he had no improper ideas; and being fearful leſt he ſhould again upbraid her with a want confidence, when ſhe aſcended the ſecond floor, ſhe became leſs cautious, and ſuffered him to lead her through the different rooms.

At length they arrived at the moſt remote apartment in the houſe, where he conſidered himſelf out of the hearing of his ſervants.

This room was chiefly occupied as a bed-room for the reception of the upper ſervants of any company that might viſit his houſe.

Having

Having entered the room, he ſhut the door without her knowledge, while ſhe was ſurveying a trifling alteration that had been made, then advancing towards her, he ſaid, "Well, my dear girl, I have now ſhewn you the various apartments that will ſhortly be your's, permit me to welcome you here," at the ſame time placing his arm round her waiſt and ſaluting her.

Sophia bluſhed, and attempted, although not with force, to diſengage herſelf from him.

He repeated the ſalute, ſtill holding her, and afterwards imprinted a kiſs on her neck.

Sophia had hitherto borne his careſſes with patience, fearful leſt he ſhould again accuſe her of harbouring unjuſt ſuſpicions, and interpret it to a want of affection; but

but on obſerving his eyes flaſhing with amorous fire, his countenance animated in the extreme, and the liberty he took to ſalute her boſom, ſhe now ſeriouſly endeavoured to diſengage herſelf.

In doing this her neckerchief became unpinned, and expoſed to his view thoſe ſnowy hillocks that would have tempted a methodiſtical ſaint, from the Holy of Holies, to have partaken of a love-feaſt ſo deſirable to his nature.

Again did he imprint them with kiſſes, and took her up in his arms for the purpoſe of conveying her to the bed.

Sophia broke from his hold, and endeavoured to reach the door; but he was too quick for her.

She then threw herſelf on her knees, and entreated he would permit her to depart.

Sir Thomas ſwore he could not, that his feelings had ſo far got the better of his reaſon, as to render it impoſſible.

"Are we not," cried he, "the ſame as man and wife? nothing is wanting but the ceremony; why, therefore, this want of confidence in me?" Again he ſeized her in his arms, and, as ſhe was going to ſpeak, ſtopt her mouth with kiſſes, and then endeavoured to force her to the bed.

Sophia, in reaching out her hand to lay hold of the window curtain, in order that ſhe might check his progreſs, drove her arm through a ſquare of glaſs, and in drawing it back was ſeverely cut.

This accident was not noticed by either of them.

Sir Thomas was too much fixed on his purpoſe, and ſhe too much terrified, to pay the leaſt attention to it.

In

In a moment he threw her on the bed, and proceeded to take unwarrantable liberties.

She ſtruggled, and at length ſcreamed with terror.

But not all her efforts to get free, nor all her terrific ſcreams, could have any effect on the paſſions of Sir Thomas; he concluded they were too far removed from the ſervants to be heard, and therefore accompliſhed his abominable purpoſe.

Yet before he was able to riſe from the bed, two of his men ſervants, who had obſerved the broken glaſs from the window fall into the area, and who, as they were going up the ſtairs to aſcertain the cauſe of the accident, heard her ſcreams, entered the room.

The elder ſervant, who had lived in the

family many years, and had known her from an infant, immediately ran to her aſſiſtance, and lifted her up, but ſhe threw herſelf upon the floor in ſpeechleſs agony of mind.

The man then turning to Sir Thomas, with honeſt indignation imprinted on his features, reproached him for his infamous conduct: "Was it for this," cried he, "my old lady brought up this amiable girl from an infant; nurtured her in her boſom as her own child; educated her, ſo as to render her fit company for the beſt of ſociety?

"Could ſhe now riſe from her grave, and behold her ſon, reducing this, her favourite, to infamy, how would ſhe execrate you!"

Sir Thomas, who plainly ſaw the raſhneſs of his own conduct had placed him within

their

their power, endeavoured to ſoften the buſineſs, and incautiouſly obſerved, that they had appointed a time for their marriage, and therefore there was no harm done.

"No harm done!" exclaimed the man; "have you not behaved like a brute and a monſter; committed a rape under the maſk of affection?

"Had you even eſteemed her, you never could have endured her tears, her entreaties, and her dreadful cries.

"I know there are ſome fond couples who when left together, time and opportunity ſuiting, and their inclinations mutual, have degraded themſelves by committing error; and where truth and affection dwells, that error is repaired by marriage; but this is too horrid to be brought in compariſon with it."

Sir Thomas requeſted the company of the men in another room; and having arrived there, he declared himſelf willing to make all the amends in his power, and requeſted them not to mention the circumſtance.

"What amends?" cried the old man.

"I mean to marry her," replied Sir Thomas; "but you know me too well to ſuppoſe I will be forced into ſuch a ſtep; it muſt and ſhall be my own act."

"Don't ſay it," replied the man, "but do it."

"It is my intention," replied Sir Thomas; "be you but ſecret."

"Act like a man of honour, of feeling, and a chriſtian," replied the old man, "and you will have no reaſon to complain of me."

Sir Thomas then offered them money, which

which the ſervant who had hitherto been only a ſpectator received, but the old man ſcorned to accept.

Having obtained from them a promiſe of ſecrecy, he prevailed on them to return down ſtairs, leſt ſome others ſhould come up, and more particularly as he wiſhed to ſpeak ſome words of comfort to Sophia.

He retuned to the wretched girl, who was then ſitting on the floor, her hand leaning againſt the bedſtead, and deſpair figured in her countenance.

Sir Thomas raiſed her in his arms, and ſeating her on a chair, endeavoured to leſſen her affliction by promiſes of truth, and declaring he was aſhamed of his paſt conduct.

Sophia was inconſolable; ſhe inſiſted on immediately being allowed to return to her father.

Sir Thomas repreſented the impropriety of ſuch a ſtep at preſent; and then diſcovering her arm which was cut by the glaſs, he lamented the accident, and taking out his handkerchief tied it round the wound.

Scarcely had he finiſhed tying up her arm, before the ſervant, who had received the bribe, and whoſe name was William, knocked at the door, and informed him that Mr. Bridport was walking up towards the houſe.

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed Sophia, and roſe from the chair for the purpoſe of running to meet him.

Sir Thomas ſtopped her, "For God's ſake," cried he, "act with prudence; conſider, if your father ſhould find you thus, what will be the conſequence.—He will inſult me; and, in deſpite of my affection,

put

put it out of my power to act by you with honour."

No intreaties or arguments could prevail with Sophia. Sir Thomas, therefore, to screen himself from detection, placed her in the chair, and running to the door, took out the key and locked it on the outside, leaving her to contemplate alone the horrors of her situation.

Sir Thomas now desired the man to inform Mr. Bridport, if he asked for his daughter, that she was not there.

The man did as directed, and Bridport departed.

Sir Thomas next turned his attention on the most advisable steps to be pursued; knowing the danger he should incur if he permitted her to return, and having a strong desire to retain her in his possession as a mistress, he determined on

conveying her to Mrs. Gripe, ſhe being the moſt likely perſon to countenance ſuch a procedure.

Having reſolved upon this plan, he again viſited Sophia, informed her that her father was gone, and endeavoured by every ſpecious argument he could make uſe of, to gain her conſent for remaining with him.

Sophia looked on ſuch a propoſal with horror; threw herſelf on her knees before him; pleaded the diſtreſs her father would ſuffer, and ſtrongly reprobated the infāmy of ſuch a proceeding.

Sir Thomas, finding all entreaty uſeleſs, endeavoured to prevail on her to accept of ſome refreſhment.

This ſhe refuſed, but he would admit of no denial, and therefore locked her up again in the apartment, while he went

for

for ſome wine; and having returned with a bottle and two glaſſes, he had the addreſs to put into the glaſs deſigned for her a quantity of opium, and filled it up with wine; then pouring out a glaſs for himſelf, he wiſhed it might be the laſt he drank, if he did not mean to deal with honour by her.

He now inſiſted on her taking her glaſs, but was not able to prevail on her; at length, partly by force, ſhe was compelled to drink it.

The ſenſe of her ſituation prevented the opium from operating for a conſiderable time, till at laſt ſhe was overpowered by it, and ſunk on the chair.

Now was the time Sir Thomas deſigned to forward his plan.

He deſired William to get his chariot ready, if poſſible, without the knowledge

of any one, and drive to the back of the garden, there to wait his coming.

William having obeyed the order, Sir Thomas took up Sophia in his arms, conveyed her down ſtairs and through the garden, without being obſerved, as the evening was advanced, and all the ſhutters cloſed.

Having reached the chariot, he put her in, and deſired William to drive to Mrs. Gripe's.

So large a doſe of opium had he given her, that ſhe never awoke till the enſuing morning, when ſhe found herſelf undreſt, in bed, and Sir Thomas laying by her ſide.

He had intended, after conveying her to Mrs. Gripe's, to return home, but when he beheld her in bed, lovely in the arms of ſleep, he could not prevail upon himſelf

ſelf to leave her; he likewiſe conſidered it would afford him an opportunity of endeavouring to reconcile her to her ſituation.

She ſaw plainly that ſhe was not in Sir Thomas's houſe, every room of which ſhe was well acquainted with.

She beheld her betrayer by her ſide, in whoſe power ſhe now was, and with whom all reſiſtance would be futile.

The idea of what her father muſt be ſuffering during her abſence tortured her already diſtracted mind, and no relief was left her but her tears.

Sir Thomas kiſſed them away, and throwing his arms around her, preſt her to his heart.

She ſcreamed at his touch, but it was all uſeleſs, ſhe was completely within his power, and in a houſe where no relief could reach her.

Thus

Thus was Sophia loſt, while her raviſher triumphed in his ſucceſs.

About twelve o'clock in the day, Sir Thomas, having left ſtrict orders with Mrs. Gripe to prevent the eſcape of Sophia, returned to his houſe.

Bridport had been twice there the preceding evening, and from a gardener had learnt that his daughter was ſeen to enter in the day, but he could gain no further intelligence.

He never attempted to take repoſe that night, but early in the morning again viſited the houſe, and was there when Sir Thomas made his appearance.

CHAP. XI.

BRIDPORT in an angry tone demanded of him where he had ſequeſtered his daughter.

Sir Thomas affected to be ſurpriſed at the queſtion, declared that he walked with her only to the ſide of the road, where he parted from her, as ſhe informed him ſhe was going to Briſtol.

"Villain!" cried Bridport, "'tis falſe!" and ſeizing him by the collar, inſiſted on his delivering her up.

Sir Thomas ſtill vowed he knew nothing of her, till at length Bridport acquainted him with the intelligence he had received.

Sir Thomas finding it would be of no uſe

uſe to deny it further, avowed that ſhe had conſented to live with him, and adviſed him to make his mind eaſy, as he ſhould ſettle a handſome annuity on her.

This inſult tranſported Bridport to that degree, that he ſtruck him down with a crab ſtick he had in his hand.

The ſervant's hearing a ſcuffle came in and ſeparated them.

Sir Thomas vowed to be revenged for the blow, and ruſhing out of the houſe, while the ſervants prevented Bridport from following, he left the unhappy father to bewail the loſs of his daughter, and to dread the reſentment of her ſeducer.

Sir Thomas was not long before he put his threats in execution; he waited on his lawyer, and deſired him to put the warrant of attorney in force that

Bridport

Bridport had given him, nor did he ſtop here, but laid a plan for the purpoſe of totally ruining him.

The chief articles that were ſeized by virtue of the warrant of attorney conſiſted of hay and corn.

He made it a condition of ſale that the lots ſhould be cleared away in one week; which was a taſk extremely difficult to undertake.

He likewiſe made it a condition that the purchaſe money ſhould be immediately paid down.

Theſe conditions rendered the ſtock of little value, no perſons thought it worth their attention to purchaſe, unleſs they could obtain the lots for a trifle.

The auctioneer did not dwell on the articles, the ſtock therefore was ſold for one

one third of its value, and the leaſes were bought in by Sir Thomas.

Thus was Bridport totally ruined; and in leſs than three days from the ſale he was arreſted at the ſuit of Sir Thomas for arrears of rent, as before mentioned.

Sir Thomas carefully kept the knowledge of this circumſtance from Sophia.

She had no opportunity of going out, not being permitted to leave her room, or ſpeak to any perſon but Mrs. Gripe, who had received her inſtructions to be ſilent.

Sir Thomas finding Sophia was growing extremely weak, and waſting every day, thought a change of air might render her a ſervice, he therefore diſpatched a truſty ſervant to engage a houſe near Reading, which had been advertiſed

advertiſed to be let, deſiring him to agree for it in a borrowed name, as he did not wiſh to have the intruſion of company, and fixed on that of Thomſon.

Thither he removed Sophia in the ſame manner as he had conveyed her to Mrs. Gripe's, travelling all the night; nor did ſhe know of her removal till the enſuing day, when ſhe found herſelf cloſely guarded by different perſons of Mrs. Gripe's recommendation; wretches who, for the ſake of receiving double pay, would perform the moſt ſervile or villanous offices.

It was not the change of air that could reinſtate the health of Sophia; ſhe was feelingly alive to the ſituation he had placed her in, and in which he ſtill forcibly detained her; ſhe was likewiſe conſtantly in tears reſpecting her father, and

earneſtly

earneſtly entreated that ſhe might be permitted to ſee him.

Sir Thomas, to eaſe her mind, wrote to Bridport in priſon, and ſent the letter by a truſty ſervant, offering him his diſcharge, and to reinſtate him in his farms, if he would approve of his daughter's conduct, and ſignify as much to her in writing.

The virtuous heart of Bridport ſcorned to accept of this propoſal; he kept the letter for the purpoſe of expoſing Sir Thomas, but returned an anſwer to him ſuitable to the inſult offered.

Sir Thomas, on the receipt of this, finding it would not be in his power to effect a reconciliation with her father, informed her that he had received intelligence he was well in health a few weeks

weeks back, but that he had ſince died of an apoplectic fit, thereby meaning to inſinuate that grief had not haſtened his diſſolution.

Sophia believed the report of his death, but did not imagine it happened as he deſcribed.

She knew her father's extreme partiality for her, and concluded her apparent miſconduct had been the means of ſhortening his exiſtence.

This idea, in addition to every other, deprived her of reſt, of appetite, and at length threw her on a bed of ſickneſs.

Sir Thomas had mentioned the death of her father, as it would put it out of her power to entreat for an interview; and having frequently ſworn to the truth of it, could not afterwards recede.

Sir Thomas paid every attention to her

for

for a conſiderable time, and in all probability would have continued ſo to do, had not Sophia repeatedly requeſted his abſence.

When he waited on her with medicine, and endeavoured to prevail on her to take it, ſhe would ſay, " Ah, Sir Thomas, why is it you wiſh me to recover? it is but that you may have an opportunity of renewing your improper conduct, at the expence of the little peace of mind you have left me. I am confident if you would withdraw from the houſe, I ſhould get better; your preſence only reminds me of the paſt, and adds to my wretchedneſs."

Such language as this being frequently made uſe of, he at length concluded it would be the moſt adviſeable plan.

Sophia had likewiſe loſt many of her attractions;

attractions; she had become thin, pale, and emaciated.

Her eyes, once so pleasing, had now lost their lustre; she appeared, therefore, no longer an object of desire.

Her complaints, which conveyed a reproach to Sir Thomas, were extremely irksome to his nature; and this, perhaps, in addition to the rest, hastened his departure.

He had also an occasion to visit his estate, and likewise to settle the terms with Sir Charles for a large scope of land which was detached from his own, but which lay contiguous.

He therefore left her in the care of his house-keeper, giving strict order to pay her every attention, and if she should recover, not to admit her out of her sight.

The first place he visited was Mrs. Gripe's,

Gripe's, to whom he repreſented how he had acted; after which he went to his houſe, where he was ſcarcely ſeated before the old man who had witneſſed the ruin of Sophia made his appearance, and ſeverely reproached him for his conduct to Bridport, requeſting likewiſe to know what was become of his daughter.

Sir Thomas, whoſe fears obliged him to treat this man with civility, had the addreſs to perſuade him that Sophia, in conſequence of his conduct on that day, refuſed to accept his hand, notwithſtanding his earneſt entreaty, and that his affection had prompted him to retain her in his poſſeſſion, till ſhe ſhould be inclined to accept his propoſal.

Reſpecting her father, he endeavoured to excuſe himſelf on account of the blow

he

he had received, alleging that ſuch treatment no gentleman could endure, and that he merited his reſentment.

He further declared his enmity would long ſince have ceaſed, had he conducted himſelf as a parent; that he wrote to him offering him his diſcharge, and to reinſtate him in his farms, if he would overlook what was paſt, and prevail on his daughter to accept his hand; that in return he received from him an inſolent reply, refuſing his conſent, and execrating his propoſal.

To impreſs the truth of this on the man's mind, he ſhewed two or three lines in the letter which beſt ſuited his purpoſe.

This effectually impoſed on him, and ſilenced his reproaches.

Having thus ſatisfied the man and lulled his fears to reſt, he made himſelf perfectly ſatisfied concerning the fate of Bridport; and being removed from Sophia, again purſued his vicious courſes without remorſe of conſcience, or the ſmalleſt idea that there muſt come a day of retribution.

In this ſituation ſtood the concerns of Sir Thomas, when Somers met him at the cottage, and reproached him with a part of what had come to his knowledge concerning this infamous tranſaction.

No ſooner, therefore, did Bridport make his appearance at Cliffdown-lodge, than Somers welcomed him with the cordiality of a friend.

Bridport expreſſed his gratitude for the favours he had received when in priſon, and

and more particularly for the well-timed interference of Somers, which had been the means of procuring his diſcharge.

He next adviſed with Somers reſpecting the moſt convenient time to wait on Sir Charles, and thank him for his liberality.

"That taſk," replied Somers, "I will take upon myſelf.—Sir Charles is engaged with company, and cannot attend to you."

Somers knew that Sir Thomas was there, and feared the conſequences of a meeting between Bridport and him, leſt the former, tranſported by rage, ſhould act in ſuch a manner as to throw himſelf again into the power of the latter.

Bridport thanked him for his offer, but requeſted that he might be allowed, at ſome future period, when it was conve-

nient, to teſtify his acknowledgments in perſon.

Somers aſked him if he had fixt on any plan for his future exiſtence.

Bridport replied, that as yet he had not decided on any thing reſpecting it, as it was his determination firſt to ſearch for his daughter. "If," ſaid he, "I had once again my child in my arms, I would labour with pleaſure as a huſbandman for her ſupport, and think myſelf happy; as I am confident, from the virtuous education ſhe received, ſhe cannot approve of the way of life into which, I fear, he has introduced her."

Somers then acquainted him with the information he had received from Freeman of her reſidence, and the name ſhe had taken.

The fond and anxious parent could

ſcarcely

ſcarcely be prevailed upon to take any refreſhment, ſo great was his haſte to be gone in ſearch of her.

During the time he was taking a cup of coffee, Somers related to him the death of Mrs. Bentley, and the circumſtances that led to it; as likewiſe the ſuſpicion he had concerning Sir Thomas being the cauſe.

This Bridport treaſured up in his mind for the purpoſe of relating to his daughter, provided ſhe had the leaſt inclination to remain with her ſeducer; then taking up his hat, was preparing to depart.

Somers inſiſted on his acquainting him with what money he ſtood poſſeſſed of, leſt he ſhould not have a ſufficient ſum by him to perform his journey.

Bridport replied that he had five guineas and ſome ſilver, which he had been able

to ſave out of the money he ſo generouſly tranſmitted to him; which ſum, with frugality, would be ſufficient.

Somers thought otherwiſe, and gave him a ten-pound note, deſiring him, if he ſhould be fortunate enough to ſucceed in finding her, that he would immediately return to his houſe, which ſhould be at their ſervice, till ſome future plan of exiſtence was adopted.

Bridport thanked him, preſſed his hand, while his tears beſpoke the gratitude he could not utter, and inſtantly departed.

Somers, having given orders reſpecting Mrs. Bentley's funeral, ſpent great part of the day at home, ruminating on the ſcenes which had preſented themſelves to him during the preceding week, and wearying his ſpirits with anxious thoughts

thoughts concerning Theodore and Clariſſa.

This naturally recalled to his mind the ſituation of Auguſta.

He had left her unwell, and had promiſed to convey to her any intelligence he might obtain concerning them, and therefore concluded ſhe muſt be in a ſtate of equal anxiety.

He likewiſe knew that Freeman had been compelled to leave the houſe, without being permitted to ſee her, this he alſo imagined muſt add to her uneaſineſs.

For theſe reaſons he conceived, that notwithſtanding he had no pleaſing intelligence to convey, ſtill a viſit from him would be a ſmall relief, and afford him an opportunity for pleading the neceſſity of fortitude, and adviſing her to look forward with a more pleaſing hope.

Somers had, likewiſe, another motive in his intended viſit.

He thought if he could meet Sir Thomas alone, that by repeating the effects of his vicious courſes, together with the relation of Mrs. Bentley's death, it might poſſibly have ſome effect on him, at leaſt he conſidered it worth the trial.

Having dined, he left his houſe for the purpoſe of putting his intentions in practice.

CHAP. XII.

SOMERS had not walked far before he beheld Sir Thomas, and approached towards him.

He knew from experience, that by accoſting him as heretofore, was not the moſt probable method to make an impreſſion on a mind ſo hardened as his.

He had likewiſe conceived an idea which he wanted to put in practice, and for this purpoſe addreſſed him with every appearance of friendſhip.

Sir Thomas, in return, enquired with apparent anxiety, if he had gained any intelligence of Clariſſa.

Somers replied in the negative, and added, " I am ſurpriſed, Sir Thomas, at

hearing ſuch a queſtion from you, as I confeſs, I have hitherto thought you the moſt likely perſon to know where ſhe is.—If I am wrong, have the goodneſs to pardon my ſuſpicions."

Sir Thomas proteſted his innocence, and Somers affected to believe it.

"I am not the only perſon," reſumed Somers, "who had this ſuſpicion, as Mrs. Bentley was of the ſame opinion. It is my purpoſe," continued he, "to viſit the cottage this afternoon, and if you will accompany me there, I will thank you.

"You will then have an opportunity of aſſerting your innocence before her."

"As it is your wiſh," replied Sir Thomas, "I will certainly attend you, and you may depend upon it I will ſet her heart at reſt."

Somers, at this laſt expreſſion, heaved

ſigh,

ſigh, and proceeded towards the cottage.

When he reached the ferry, he frowned on the ferryman, and placed his finger on his lips, thereby ſignifying he wiſhed him to be ſilent.

The man obſerved him, and took the hint.

When they arrived at the cottage he obſerved the ſame conduct towards the woman, and beckoning to Sir Thomas, they proceeded up ſtairs.

The firſt object that attracted their notice, was the corpſe of Mrs. Bentley, lying in a coffin covered with black, the lid ſtanding by its ſide.

Sir Thomas ſtarted back, and turned pale.

"There is nothing to fear," cried Somers; "it is now a piece of lifeleſs clay;

hearing ſuch a queſtion from you, as I confeſs, I have hitherto thought you the moſt likely perſon to know where ſhe is.—If I am wrong, have the goodneſs to pardon my ſuſpicions."

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and when you reflect, if what you have aſſerted be true, concerning your innocence, that you have not been guilty of this murder, it muſt afford you a comfortable conſolation.—But what muſt that man be, who, by the infamy of his conduct, has deprived this poor woman of exiſtence? Confeſs, Sir Thomas, is he not a monſter?"

"I muſt be gone," cried Sir Thomas; "there is ſomething in death ſo ſhocking to my nature, that I cannot endure the ſight of it."

"And why not?" reſumed Somers. "Are you a man and a chriſtian? If you are, why ſhould death appear awful to you?

"When a good man views a ſcene like this, his ſoul will naturally be lifted upwards, while he preſents a petition to his

his God.—But the bad man will tremble at the ſight; 'twill be dreadful to his nature, as it muſt remind him of the period when he will receive a puniſhment for his crimes.

"The man who is engaged in the purſuit of vicious courſes, and, protected by his fortune, eſcapes the rigour of the law, thinks all is ſafe with him, till a ſcene like this preſents itſelf; this muſt recal to his mind the infamy of his conduct, and aſſure him the day of retribution will come.—How happy would he then be, if he could rid his conſcience of one crime!"

"Mr. Somers," ſaid Sir Thomas, "you addreſs your converſation in a manner that leads me to ſuppoſe, you imagine me the vicious character you have been deſcribing.

"It

"It is true, I took Sophia Bridport into keeping, and perhaps carried my reſentment too far reſpecting her father; but with reſpect to being accountable for this poor woman's death, I aſſure you I am not, as I have no knowledge, whatever, of Clariſſa."

"Sir Thomas," replied Somers, "if a ſcene like this will not force a confeſſion from your lips, yet permit me to hope it will ſo far impreſs your mind, as to make you relinquiſh putting your deſigns in practice, provided it is as I have ſtrong reaſons to ſuſpect; reſtore her to my care, and I will place her in ſome family where ſhe will receive protection, and continue to be an ornament to her ſex.—On the other hand, purſue your preſent plan, you will then, for the ſatisfaction of a momentary enjoyment, plunge

her

her into diſgrace and miſery, and entail eternal wretchedneſs on yourſelf."

"If I really knew any thing of Clariſſa," replied Sir Thomas, "I might poſſibly attend to your advice, but as it is otherwiſe, you are but waſting your words.

"I will no longer witneſs this ſcene," continued he, approaching the door, "therefore, ſhall wiſh you a pleaſant evening."

Somers followed him.

Little paſſed between them till they had recroſſed the ferry, when Sir Thomas, who had got rid of the awful ſpectacle, and aſſumed a trifling degree of falſe courage, exclaimed, "Upon my ſoul, Somers, you are a capital parſon.—It is a pity, for the ſake of the community in general, that you do not turn methodiſt preacher;

preacher; you would look wondrous well mounted in a ſecond floor, or perked upon a table in a country village, haranguing your itinerant hearers: would any perſon believe you could have made ſo elaborate a diſcourſe over the mouldering carcaſe of an old woman?"

"Sir Thomas," returned Somers, "I do not believe you are ſo bad as you pretend."

"This is only the effects of falſe pride; you are aſhamed that any ſcene, however awful, ſhould affect you; and, like the children in the dark, 'ſing out to fright the devil:' fooliſh attempt! as if you could eſcape your own reflections by ill-timed raillery."

Somers was right in his conjecture, as was evident by his reply.

"Faith," cried he, "if you will not

ſet

ſet up methodiſt preacher, you muſt turn conjuror, for to tell you the truth, I did not half like that curſed queer ſcene you introduced me to.

" The old cat had her eyes open, and ſeemed to look at me as much as to ſay, ' You are there, are you?' but I could have replied with Macbeth, ' Thou can'ſt not ſay 'twas I did it!' "

" That I believe," rejoined Somers, " and with equal truth."

" At it again!" cried Sir Thomas; " you put me in mind of a blind beggar who never alters his tune for twenty years together."

Having arrived at Sir Charles's, Ellen, who obſerved Somers approaching, informed him that her miſtreſs wiſhed to ſpeak with him.

Somers followed her to a ſmall parlour, a

to

to which place ſhe had retired for the purpoſe of avoiding Sir Thomas, alleging that ſhe was too unwell to remain in the company of a ſtranger.

Auguſta roſe on his entering the room, and eagerly enquired if he had heard of Theodore.

Somers replied he had not been able to gain any intelligence of him.

Auguſta, whoſe heart was oppreſt through a variety of circumſtances, could not refrain from ſhedding a tear. "Mr. Somers," ſaid ſhe, "I hope you will excuſe me for troubling you with what oppreſſes me; but you ſeem to act and feel for me as a parent, a brother, and a friend; I will therefore throw off all reſerve before you, and make you acquainted with the ſtate of mind in which I am, and the principal occaſion of it; truſting you

will

will adviſe with me on what ſteps are beſt to be purſued.

"I feel," continued ſhe, "that Theodore is neceſſary to my happineſs.

"At the ſame time, I am aware that my father would execrate any propoſal he might make, unleſs his family and fortune were equivalent to mine.

"Have you, therefore, ever heard from Theodore, or from the perſon who came from London, that his expectations are ſuch, as when explained, would entitle him to expect my father's conſent?"

Somers replied that he knew of nothing but what fell from the lips of Theodore, which was, that he could prove himſelf upon an equality with her, if required; "and this teſtimony," added Somers, "was partly corroborated by the meſſenger from London."

"Thus

"Thus far," reſumed Auguſta, "Theodore informed me; and would have made me acquainted with who he was, but that I was blinded by reſentment in conſequence of the falſe intelligence I received."

Somers aſſured her his opinion of Theodore was ſo firmly grounded, that ſhe might with ſafety rely on the truth of his aſſertions.

"Then," rejoined Auguſta, "nothing ſhall make me alter my ſentiments in his favour."

She next enquired concerning Freeman and Clariſſa, and received from him all the intelligence he had to convey, as likewiſe his various ſuggeſtions, which materially added to the depreſſion of her ſpirits.

"I will now," reſumed Auguſta, "inform

form you what has paſſed during your abſence.

" Early this morning my father viſited me, and after making uſe of ſeveral invectives againſt Edward, for the deception he had practiſed, declared that he ſhould find I was not ſo deſtitute, but could be married to his ſuperior, a gentleman he had ſelected for me, who, ſetting aſide a few youthful follies, was really a worthy character, poſſeſſed a large eſtate unincumbered, and whoſe penetration and good ſenſe were ſuperior to every one he had before been acquainted with.

" I liſtened," continued Auguſta, " to theſe, and a variety of other flattering eulogiums, without having a conception of the perſon he alluded to, at length he named Sir Thomas Blandford."

" You ſurpriſe me," cried Somers: " I

ſhould

ſhould have concluded his ideas were totally abſorbed in the iniquitous plan he has laid to ruin Clariſſa, and that he would have had no leiſure at preſent to have thought of an honourable courtſhip: but perhaps he has only mentioned this to deceive Sir Charles, without any intention of proſecuting it."

"I am of a contrary opinion," rejoined Auguſta; "for when he was giving Theodore an improper character, by ſaying he was catering for a wife and a miſtreſs at the ſame time, he was truly defining himſelf: beſides which, I have had ſufficient proof of what I advance. My father further acquainted me that he had ſolicited for leave to pay his addreſſes, which leave he had given him, and that he ſhould exert his authority as a parent in ſeeing it carried into effect.

"This

"This propoſal," continued Auguſta, "which I had no reaſon to expect, and which at all times, ſince his character has been delineated, would have been diſguſting to me, is rendered more particularly ſo at preſent, in conſequence of my ſentiments in behalf of Theodore, a perſon ſo totally different from Sir Thomas, ſo tender, ſo reſpectful, and in fact ſo much ſuited to my own diſpoſition, that it makes me view his oppoſite with horror."

"What reply," reſumed Somers, "did you make to your father on the receipt of this?"

"I declared," replied Auguſta, "that it was impoſſible for me even to reſpect him, much leſs to liſten to a propoſal from him; on which my father, with a ſneer on his countenance that I had never before

before experienced, added, 'We will ſee whether you or I ſhall be able to conquer,' and immediately left me to reflect on what he had ſaid, in which ſituation I remained till ſummoned to breakfaſt.

"It was my intention to have retired from the breakfaſt parlour as early as I could with propriety; but my father, perhaps ſuſpecting my intentions, aroſe before I thought he had finiſhed, and deſired I would remain there till he returned. This," continued ſhe, "was evidently done to afford Sir Thomas an opportunity of paying his fulſome addreſſes, for no ſooner had my father left the room, than he began by ſtating, that from the firſt moment he beheld me, his heart had been enſlaved by my beauty, accompliſhments, and a variety of ſuch flattering encomiums, too groſs for me to follow; he then took

took a review of the conduct obſerved by you, which he declared was dictated by the mere effuſions of your own fancy, and purpoſely invented to calumniate him in the eyes of my father, as you ſuſpected he had formed an attachment for me, and thought by acting in this manner, it would remove every obſtacle that might impede the progreſs of Theodore, who he had every reaſon to believe had preſumed to inſult me with his addreſſes.

" I had determined," continued Auguſta, " not to utter a ſentence in reply; but he prevented me from following my plan, for after having finiſhed his complimentary ſtrain in my behalf, and exhauſted his invectives againſt Theodore, he threw himſelf at my feet, again to plead his cauſe, and had the aſſurance to ſeize my hand, which he forced to his lips; unable

to endure this, I ſtarted up, declaring that himſelf and his addreſſes were equally odious to me, and, deſiring I might never again be troubled with ſo contemptible a ſubject, left the room."

"When I conſider," ſaid Somers, "the character of the man, and his preſent purſuits, I think you acted perfectly right, and I hope ſuch a conduct on your part will prevent all further importunity on his."

"I wiſh I may find it ſo," rejoined Auguſta; "but I have every reaſon to ſuſpect otherwiſe.

"Scarcely had an hour elapſed from the time I had left Sir Thomas, before my father, who had evidently been informed of what had paſſed between us, entered the room where I was ſitting; he upbraided me for my conduct; proteſted by his

his Maker he would no longer be tortured by my petty excuſes or ill-place dattachments; declared he knew that I had fixed my heart upon a ſcoundrel who was little better, or perhaps worſe, than a highwayman; that Theodore had deceived you under ſpecious pretences, while he ran away with Clariſſa, the truth of which, he ſaid, would ſhortly appear; vowed if he could find him he would lay him in priſon as a vagabond; and highly blamed you for ſuffering your judgment to be impoſed on by ſo atrocious a character.

"This language," continued Auguſta, "forced a few words from me in favour of Theodore, which ſo greatly enraged my father, that I was fearful leſt he ſhould have ſtruck me; but I was happily relieved by the entrance of a ſervant who

brought two letters from London; one of them was for me, and the other for my father: theſe letters were from my aunt in London, ſtating that ſhe was unwell, that ſhe wiſhed much for my ſociety, and requeſted I would intercede with my father that I might be allowed immediately to viſit her, not doubting but the ſincere affection I had always manifeſted towards her, would prompt me to haſten my journey.

"I plainly diſcovered," continued Auguſta, "by the features of my father, that he was mortified on account of the invitation; he left the room without communicating the contents of his letter, or affording me an opportunity of aſking his approbation.

"From that time till dinner I was left to conjecture what would be his determination;

nation; but on entering the room, I beheld a total alteration in his countenance.

"He then acquainted me that I muſt prepare for my journey to London, and that he expected in a few weeks to be able to join me."

"I ſhould be inclined," ſaid Somers, "to think that this alteration in your father was brought about by the interference of Sir Thomas; can you inform me," continued he, "if your aunt is intimate with him?"

"I have ſeen Sir Thomas in her company," replied Auguſta, "two or three times at public places, but he was not in the habit of viſiting her; yet I have a dread upon my ſpirits leſt my father ſhould write to her, deſiring he may be admitted, and requeſting her to forward his ſuit; this would give me great

great uneaſineſs, more particularly as he, to put her on her guard, would not fail to mention his ſuſpicions concerning Theodore, and by ſo doing ſubject me to continual ſcenes of mortification."

Somers adviſed her to obey the will of her father in every thing that laid in her power; but warned her not to give her hand where ſhe could not beſtow her heart.

"Then," replied Auguſta, "no one but Theodore will ever be entitled to it. I have now," continued ſhe, "one requeſt to aſk, which is, that you will not fail to correſpond with me by letter; and ſhould any intelligence reach you concerning either Theodore or Clariſſa, that I may be immediately appriſed of it."

Somers promiſed to fulfil her commands, and then informed her of Mrs. Bentley's

Bentley's death, which drew a tear from the eye of Auguſta, and an execration from her lips againſt him who had haſtened the event.

Somers took leave of Auguſta, and ſpent half an hour in general converſation with Sir Charles, after which he returned home to indulge his own private ſorrows that preyed on his vitals, and was hourly haſtening him towards his grave.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

T. Davison,
White-Friars.

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